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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[THE GAMBLER'S DAUGHTER.]

HER BITTER FOE;

OR,

A STRUGGLE FOR A HEART.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Lost Through Gold," "Strong Temptation,"

&c., &c.

PROLOGUE.

SCENE I.

AT SOUTHVALE.

Heaven from all creatures hides the book of fate.

LONDON, not the fashionable haunts of the aristocracy, still less the respectable suburbs of the middle class, but a part of the great metropolis much frequented by a race who belong to neither of these divisions of society—a race who despise the tradesman's honest toil and envy the nobility their wealth, people who are too idle or too disappointed to work, who follow the modern calling known as living by their wits.

Such from boyhood had been Lester D'Arcy's occupation. At fifty the said wits had not brought him in a very luxurious income; he never had a penny that was not anticipated. All his family had turned their backs upon him, and he and his only child inhabited furnished apartments in a region situated between the

Regent's Park and Oxford Street, which for want of a better title we will call Southvale.

The landlady of these apartments would have been puzzled had anyone asked her about her lodger. He was often behind with his rent, but he always paid up at last, and he didn't look into the bills like some folks would, in fact he was not a bad sort of gentleman, and no doubt it was hard work teaching drawing, though his pupils must be very fond of him or "they'd never come and sit with him of an evening by the hour together as they did."

And this would have expressed Mrs. Bold's real belief.

Lester D'Arcy's avowed calling was that of drawing-master, and he really visited one or two schools once a week, but the source from which his income came was a less honourable one. The young men who flocked to his room of an evening sought amusements quite unconnected with landscapes and crayons—in a word Mr. D'Arcy was a professional gambler.

Gamblers are usually represented as villains of the deepest dye, but Lester was not so heartless as many of his class. He never tempted hard-worked city clerks to risk their scanty gains. His disciples all belonged to the upper ten thousand, and were young men of more fortune than brains, whom even heavy losses could not quite ruin. He had rarely more than three or four victims on hand at once, and such was the charm of his manner and the amusement of his conversation that he had often made no inconsiderable haul before the loser discovered that everything was not quite square and straightforward.

The fashionable youth of the present day seldom cares to own that he has been taken in,

and so Mr. D'Arcy's old victims did not warn fresh comers, and he pursued his calling with very little unpleasantness.

The wonder was that he had not made more by it. But then Lester was no economist; money melted away in his fingers; he loved luxury, and smoked the most expensive cigars and drank the rarest wines. Nature had unfortunately gifted him with all the tastes of a man of wealth, but cruelly forgot to add the fortune which would have enabled him to indulge them.

It was June, the height of a brilliant season. Lester D'Arcy was uncommonly fortunate; the rooms in Southvale had quite a festive appearance; wine and fruit stood upon a centre table; at a smaller one on which stood a carefully shaded lamp sat the cardplayers—the host and three young men whose ages united would not have made fourscore.

One of them seemed ill-satisfied with the luck dealt out to him. More than once an expression of impatience escaped him, and at last he got up, exclaiming:

"It is no use playing with such cards. Keith, come here and take my hand."

The person addressed, younger by some years than any of the players, sat a little apart taking but little interest in the game. It was his first visit to Southvale, and he had inwardly determined it should be his last. He was keen enough to see a little of Mr. D'Arcy's character, and he wondered privately what could have brought his friend Geoffrey Hamilton to visit such a man.

"Thanks," he said, coldly, "it's too late to begin to play to-night. We'd better be going, Geoffrey, if you've had enough."

"It's eleven o'clock," said D'Arcy, in his

peculiarly silky tones in which he could say the most bitter things without seeming to be aware of it. "Your Mentor makes you keep early hours, Mr. Hamilton."

A little sneer went round the table.

" Didn't know you brought your nurse with you, Hamilton," said one of the men.

" Shut up," retorted Geoffrey. " Jocelyn is neither nurse nor Mentor, and I'm going to have another round. Come on."

They resumed their seats and the game progressed.

Keith Jocelyn felt indescribably weary of the whole scene, when a girl entered, and slowly making her way to the centre table began to busy herself with the decanters and glasses.

She is the heroine of this story—a bitter vengeance will be worked by her hands. But at this time she looked little like a heroine—a tall, unformed, overgrown girl of sixteen, with a bad complexion, dark eyes, which looked too big for her face, and masses of swart hair which hung undressed over her shoulders.

She wore a short pink dress and a thick chain round her throat. Looking at her Keith felt struck with pity; he had sisters of his own at home—how different was their sheltered, cared-for life from that of this neglected girl.

" Let me help you," he said, kindly, crossing over to her side.

" Not yet," whispered Julie. " Papa will not like to be interrupted in his game. I am getting it ready. There," as she replaced the last glass, " now I can go back."

" Back where?" rather puzzled.

" Hero," drawing a curtain and disclosing a little alcove by the window. " I always sit here of an evening, unless there is one short and I have to play cards."

" Do you like cards?" seating himself near her and talking as freely as he would have done to a child.

" I hate them," opening her eyes with a wild, fierce expression. " I could play before I was ten years old, I think I detest cards as much as some children do their lesson books."

" Have you no mother?" gently.

" No," returned Julie. " I do not remember my mother; she died when I was a baby, and papa and I have travelled about ever since."

" It must be a dull life for you."

" It is not dull, something is always happening. We are always moving. In August we shall go to Germany."

" Shall you like that?"

" I don't care," shaking her elf locks defiantly, " it won't make any difference to me."

" It must," said Keith, smiling. " Germany is very different to England."

" Don't you understand?" said the girl, in a whisper; " I thought, by the way I looked at you, you saw through it all. We are not what we pretend to be. My father lives by playing cards—we are gamblers."

" You are not anxious to spare your feelings."

Julie shook her head.

" Do you think I don't understand? I know we are outcasts. Not one of the men who come here would ask my father to their home or notice him in the street if they met him with their mothers or sisters. We cannot make friends, we have to get our living out of our acquaintances. Do you mean to say it matters whether we are in London or Baden-Baden? Bah! it's same everywhere."

Keith looked at her in surprise. He was very young—two or three and twenty at the most—a kind of chivalrous longing to rescue this girl from her position came to him, to give her a chance of respectability and happiness.

" I am very sorry," the young man said, earnestly. " I wish I could help you."

Julie raised her eyes to his face, they were full of intense feeling. For an instant she looked almost beautiful.

" You cannot help me," she said, in a sort of hoarse whisper. " No one can; but I shall never forget that you were the only one who wished to."

" Could you not leave this life?" he suggested.

" Surely Mr. D'Arcy must know it is not desirable for you."

Julie looked bewildered.

" I cannot make my father out. He does not love me—at times he seems to hate me—but the strangest part of it is he can never bear me out of his sight."

A noise of voices and laughter told that the game was over. Keith rose.

" We may meet again some day," he said, taking the girl's hand in his. " I hope it will be a happier meeting than this. Fortune's wheel turns very swiftly. If you keep true to yourself who knows what may happen in the years to come?"

To his intense amazement the girl seized his hand in both of hers and pressed her lips to it with passionate fervour.

" I shall never forget you," she exclaimed, wildly, " never till I die."

And with these words ringing in his ear, with the girl's tears wet upon his hand, Mr. Jocelyn went to rejoin his friend Hamilton.

In spite of the manner in which Geoffrey had received Keith's remonstrance the two were sworn friends, and as they walked homewards in the beautiful starlit night the younger man ventured to renew his warning.

" I don't like D'Arcy, Hamilton, I believe he is a swindler. Where did you pick him up?"

Geoffrey smiled. His ill-temper had vanished.

" I think he picked me up. I'm sorry I was so put out, Keith, but you shouldn't have spoken out before those fellows. D'Arcy looked as though he could have killed you."

" I shouldn't care to be at his mercy; he has an evil-looking face."

" Most people think him very handsome."

" Yes, but he has a sinister expression."

Hamilton shrugged his shoulders mildly. " I can't go about thinking of men's expressions. Don't worry, Keith," in another tone, " your people are coming up next week, and I shall not be likely to bestow my society on D'Arcy then."

For Mr. Hamilton was an acknowledged suitor, though not yet an accepted wooer, for the hand of Keith Jocelyn's eldest sister.

The subject of Mr. D'Arcy, however, seemed to have a strange fascination for Keith; he returned to it of his own accord.

" I wish you'd tell me who that man is. He gives me a most uncomfortable sensation, as if I'd known him somewhere before."

Geoffrey opened his eyes.

" In a previous state doubtless if you believe in the transmigration of souls. I don't know much about D'Arcy myself. There are a great many stories about him. Some say that's not his right name."

" Have you seen his daughter?"

" She must be a trial to him," tossing away the end of his cigar. " The most hopelessly ugly girl I ever saw."

" I liked her."

Hamilton opened his eyes.

" She may be very nice. She hasn't one good feature, and never opens her mouth by any chance. It must be like living with a mummy."

" Poor thing!"

" Poor D'Arcy! I shouldn't like living with a mummy. Besides, he's doubly unfortunate; the mother was a beauty, if report's right."

By mutual consent, tacitly given, the two friends never alluded to that evening's visit after the homeward walk. Geoffrey very soon became engaged to Keith's sister, and, in his new character of fiancé he had little time for such amusements as were in vogue at Southvale. Keith never mentioned the D'Arcys, because he hoped for his sister's sake that Mr. Hamilton had forgotten them, but often there recurred to his own mind that scene in the alcove—the girl's gleaming eyes, and the passionate kisses that had fallen upon his hand.

" Poor, lonely child," he thought, sometimes, as the girl's face rose up before him, " I should like to know what has become of her."

He little recked that Julie D'Arcy was to cross his path again, and that in years to come

she would know even more of her than he wished.

Keith Jocelyn was not a fatalist, but could he have had only one glance into the future he would have wiped out even with tears of blood, had it been possible, that brief episode of his life. He would have done ought on earth to escape the consequences of that one half-hour's conversation which for all time were to fix their mark upon his fate.

Never had appearances been more deceptive than in this case. To a looker on any one of the other men in Lester D'Arcy's rooms would have seemed more in danger of repenting their visit than Keith. He never touched a card, he never laid a stake, he had no taste for gambling to induce him to return to Southvale again and again. He went that once at Geoffrey Hamilton's request chiefly because he hoped to prevent his friend's lingering there till an advanced hour, and such was the irony of fate Geoffrey was to come off from the affair with the loss of a few pounds otherwise scathless soon to forget in a happy marriage his incipient taste for gambling, and Keith was to remember that to his dying day as the one false step that entailed dire consequences on him and one whom he held dearer than himself, who was hereafter to become his heart's best love.

SCENE II.

FATHER AND DAUGHTER.

There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.

The visitors had all departed; they had not lingered long after Jocelyn and his friend Lester D'Arcy, a snug pile of gold before him, sat leaning back in his easy chair, looking very well satisfied with the night's performance. His wine stood on the table near him, and he sipped it now and then with the air of a connoisseur. A smile played on his face; he looked the picture of content and satisfaction. Surely there could not have been a better moment at which to present a petition to him.

" Father?"

He stirred uneasily, and the smile faded as he gazed upon his daughter.

Julie was a source of continual disappointment to Mr. D'Arcy. He was an innate beauty-lover (men of his stamp often are). Had she only been fair to see, he would have delighted in his daughter. The one true feeling of his life had been love for her mother. Could Julie only have looked at him with his wife's face he would have done anything in the world for her. Unfortunately the girl was a plain portrait of himself. The resemblance was visible enough to be anything but flattering to one who took pride in his good looks.

Then, from a commercial point of view, this child was a complete failure. A boy at seventeen would have been out in the world earning his own living, independent of his father. A girl with a little tact and a few attractions might have been a most valuable ally to him in his calling, but Julie was simply a dead burden. She seemed to have not the slightest idea of making herself agreeable. Her heavy, ponderous manner was as repellent as her plain face. Mr. D'Arcy often looked at the girl and wondered what possible use she could ever be to him.

" Father," repeated Julie, seeing her appeal was disregarded, " I want to talk to you."

Mr. D'Arcy opened his eyes.

" My dear," he observed, philosophically, " you hardly ever speak at all. Whatever makes you choose midnight as the period for your conversation?"

" You will not get up till twelve," said the girl, bitterly. " You go out all the afternoon, and in the evening you always have people here."

" True," admitted Lester D'Arcy, lightly. " Well, Julie, I am listening to you, only let me suggest that you make haste. It is time you were in bed."

" It was

"I want to go to school."

She stood in front of him, but she never once looked at him as she blurted out her words. There is no other expression; she seemed afraid her courage would desert her if she did not make the effort at once.

"Rather late in the day," said her father, with that equable serenity so few things disturbed. "You are more than fourteen."

"Sixteen last week."

"You can read and write and keep accounts, you can speak enough French and German to make yourself understood. I don't see that you need any other accomplishments, Julie, in your position."

The girl threw back her head haughtily.

"Tell me one thing. Of what use am I here? Only answer me that."

"None whatever," frankly admitted her father.

"And I am so plain that I should scare your friends away rather than attract them," she said, with a hoarse little laugh. "You will be rather better off without me than otherwise."

D'Arcy looked at her in amazement.

"My dear child," he said, more affectionately than he often spoke, "what has put such extraordinary notions into your head?"

"I have been thinking a long time."

"And the result is you wish to go to school?"

"Yes," firmly.

"Have you thought what a change it would be for you, Julie?"

"Yes."

"I may not have done much for you," admitted her father, "but, at least, I have never crossed your will. I suppose you have had your own way ever since you were born."

Julie shrugged her shoulders.

"Besides," went on her father, "you have been perfectly free and unfettered. It's one benefit of being poor, one has no appearances to keep up. You have never once had to trouble yourself about what the world thought of you."

"But I should like to trouble myself. I can't bear living under a ban, beneath other people's contempt. Father, you don't understand; I want to be respectable."

"Respectable! Do you mean that I am not respectable?" inquired her father.

"I mean," shaking her head, "that you and I are not like other people. We don't belong to anybody or anything. I should like to be like other girls."

Mr. D'Arcy looked at her anxiously. He could hardly understand her mood.

"I could not afford to send you to a good school, Julie; you must know that."

"I would not go to any but a good school," she said, firmly; "but isn't there some kind of thing they call half-pupil? I could teach French and German to make up the terms."

Mr. D'Arcy made a rapid calculation on his fingers. It so happened that he was aware of a half-pupil being required in a school where he taught drawing. The premium was rather less than what Julie cost him at home; perhaps it would be as well to let her go.

"You'll get tired of it," he said, laughing. "In a week you'll be crying to come back."

"I have never cried since I can remember. Do you mean that I may go, father?"

"If I can manage it."

She bent down and kissed him on the forehead. It was the first caress she had ever given him since her baby days. He was moved a little in spite of himself.

"I don't think you'll like it, Julie. You have led too free a life to settle down into the routine of an ordinary schoolgirl."

"We shall see."

"I'd rather have seen you married," said Mr. D'Arcy, with a sigh. "That's the best way of providing for penniless daughters."

"Father!"

"Yes. What are you driving at now, Julie, pocket money? I'll do what I can, but you mustn't be unreasonable. Remember I am a poor man."

"It wasn't pocket money," said the girl, a

little indignantly. "Father, before I go away won't you tell me something about my mother?"

D'Arcy's face blanched. Even now he could not bear to hear his wife's name.

"She was a good woman, my dear," he said, in a husky voice; "perhaps her only fault was that she loved me too well."

"Can anyone love too well?" asked Julie, more of herself than her father.

"All her family cast her off because she chose to marry me," went on Mr. D'Arcy, "but we were very happy in spite of them. I think sometimes if she had lived, Julie, I might have been a very different sort of man, but she died before we had been married two years."

"And were they sorry?"

"Who?"

"The relations who had been so cruel."

"I don't know; I never heard anything of them. It would have pleased her if they had come round, but after she was dead it did not matter how they behaved. I have never asked them for anything. I would not either if I were starving."

"Good night, father," rising slowly; "you will not forget you have promised that I shall go to school?"

And with that she took up her candle and slowly left the room.

"It is the strangest whim I ever heard of," mused Lester D'Arcy, when he was left alone.

"I never quite understand Julie. Sometimes I think there is a great deal more in her than comes out. The idea of a girl who has been her own mistress ever since she could walk wishing to go to school, and as a half-pupil too—her grandfather's horror, if he could know it. I wonder if the old man's alive yet? Strange how little I've thought of that family all these years."

Somehow that conversation with his daughter had made Lester D'Arcy disinclined for slumber. He rose and fetched the newspaper, hoping to beguile himself into a more tranquil mood. It was the "Evening Standard," and the first item he saw was as follows:

"We regret to announce the death of the Honourable Eric Norton, only son of Lord Norton, of Bellevue. The deceased gentleman was only thirty-nine years of age. He leaves a widow, but no children."

Simple and commonplace as this paragraph appears, its effect upon Lester D'Arcy was magical. So far from inducing sleep the newspaper appeared to have put new life into him. He got up and paced the room excitedly several times.

"Who would have thought it?" he cried, speaking aloud through intense agitation. "Eric Norton dead and childless! childless! Well, I'm glad; I always hated him; but it is strange how all this fits in with Julie's whims. I must have sent her to school now whether she liked it or not."

And with that parental reflection he went to bed.

CHAPTER I.

A TERRIBLE THREAT.

And if we do but watch the hour
There never yet was human power
Which could evade if unforgiven
The patient search and vigil long
Of him who treasures up a wrong.

In a very different part of London from Southwark, though perhaps not so very many miles away from it, stands the highly-esteemed suburb of Kilburn, the abode of respectability, worth, and merit, and the special region of ladies' schools. For these Kilburn has a great attraction—judging from their number. The marvels of the suburb are great. Firstly, it is near the parks (I am quoting from a prospectus); secondly, it is highly salubrious; thirdly, it is aristocratic; fourthly, which, by the way, does not appear in print, it is not expensive.

Well, in Kilburn there was in the year of grace eighteen hundred and seventy-one, a highly-esteemed ladies' college, presided over by

one Madame Dulcie, who, in spite of her name, was unmistakeably of English birth. She received twenty daughters of the aristocracy, and was assisted in her labours by a staff of governesses and masters.

She was a pretty woman still, five and thirty at the outside. Her grief for the late lamented M. Dulcie having somewhat abated, she was not at all averse to mild flirtations with the professors, when such could be enjoyed without the slightest fear of their reaching her pupils' ears, and the gentleman the most favoured was the artist who gave lessons in drawing and painting.

"Mr. D'Arcy has such taste," she would say to her confidante, Miss Stone; "he is such a charming man."

"But, dear madame, is he not a little, just a little too worldly?" suggested Miss Stone, who was a Plymouth brother, or should we say sister? and held serious views, and being fifty and plain had never been honoured by Mr. D'Arcy's attentions.

Madame Dulcie sighed and opined one could not have everything—in fact, she led her friend to believe that if asked to be Mrs. D'Arcy she would not be obdurate. One June afternoon the widow announced with great mystery that the drawing-master was going to call on most important business. She should receive him in the study, and whoever came they were not to be interrupted.

"Not even for a new pupil?" asked Miss Stone.

"Not even for a new pupil."

Arrayed for conquest Madame Dulcie descended to the study, there to wait in tranquil solitude for Mr. D'Arcy's arrival. After all she might have gone to the schoolroom; he did not call till five o'clock, and then remained barely twenty minutes. Miss Stone, in a perfect fever of excitement (even the elect get excited sometimes), ran to her patroness.

"Dear madame, may I wish you happiness?"

Madame Dulcie looked as if she could have beaten her subordinate.

"Don't be absurd," she said, grimly. "What has happiness to do with a business call, I should like to know?"

"But I thought this call—"

"This call was to ask me to receive Mr. D'Arcy's daughter as pupil teacher." Miss Stone started.

"I did not know he had a daughter."

"Well, she is coming to-morrow. She is to teach French and German to the younger ones, and watch the drawing. Keep a sharp eye on her. Her father says she is terribly gauze and shy."

The next day the twenty young ladies of madame's establishment were assembled in the school-room to be introduced to their new companion. Miss Stone, who had assisted in Julie's unpacking, felt a little sympathy for the girl as she noted her heavy serge dress which hung round her like a sack with no taste or style about it.

"I hope you will be happy with us," she said, primly.

Julie stared at her in blank silence, and then they went downstairs.

"Miss D'Arcy, young ladies," and twenty pairs of eyes were immediately turned upon Julie.

She stood the scrutiny well. It was her first appearance among other girls. Many of her future pupils were older than herself, but two were quite children. They stood together, a little apart from the others, and poor lonely Julie thought she had never seen such lovely faces. One was dark with hazel eyes and brown hair, the other had curly hair of the brightest gold and eyes of deep intense violet. Miss Stone beckoned the children to advance.

"These little girls will be your special charge, Miss D'Arcy," she said, kindly. "This is Maude Jocelyn," pointing to the dark-haired child, "and this," touching golden locks, "Ethel Devreux."

Then she left the room.

A spell of silence fell upon them. No one spoke a word of welcome to the new-comer, no one asked if she were tired, or had had a pleasant

journey. After a pause they all returned to their interrupted amusements, not one troubled about the half-pupil.

They were all used to luxury, many of them had kind hearts, but they were quick enough to see that Julie D'Arcy was not quite as they were. An insurmountable barrier separated them from her, and they were resolved she should not cross it.

The first week at St. Alban's seemed to Julie as if it would never pass; each day dragged painfully. The girls made her feel the pain of her position in a hundred different ways. Truly she was paying a bitter price for her desire to be "like other people." Over and over again she wished herself back at Southvale, but pride prevented her return—pride and a stronger feeling.

Keith Jocelyn had told her it was no fit life for her, and in that one interview the girl's whole heart had gone out to him as the first being who had ever spoken kindly to her. Those few parting words seemed to her a pledge that he and she should meet again.

They had been spoken carelessly with no real meaning. To Julie's disordered imagination they grew to assume the form of a solemn binding promise. She let her fancy dwell upon every syllable uttered by Keith. She treasured up the memory of his every feature until it seemed to her that he and she were bound together by a special mysterious bond, and that no one had a power to separate them.

Of all the pupils she cared for but one, Maude Jocelyn, and that because she had early discovered that Maude was Keith's sister. She was the child's shadow in recreation time. She would listen to the little girl's confidences by the hour together in the hope that she would drop some mention of Keith, and sometimes she was rewarded.

No one was surprised at her attachment to Maude, the child had one of those sweet dispositions that win all hearts, but her devotion to Julie gave great offence to one of her schoolfellows. Ethel Devreux had been Maude's inseparable companion. Only two months her junior, the two had been like sisters. Ethel was a charming child, but she had not Maude's calm temper, and she was afflicted besides with rather a jealous disposition. When she saw Julie absorb even a share of Maude's attention she was angry. She would make fanciful demands on Miss D'Arcy's time and attention to draw her away from Maude.

Ethel was twelve, Julie sixteen; one was beautiful and popular, the other plain and unnoticed. There was no actual quarrel between them, but from the first a slumbering dislike. Julie hated Ethel because the child could not help showing she regarded her as an inferior. Ethel was dimly conscious that Julie's devotion to Maude was not real, and she resented the slight to her friend.

Madame Dulcie never expressed regret at having received Miss D'Arcy—in truth, the girl was no bad bargain. She spoke French and German as a native, and proved herself a born teacher. At lessons the girls instinctively bowed down to her. But afterwards that dim barrier we have spoken of always returned. No one in so many words insulted Julie, but they all slighted her tacitly and deliberately.

The storm broke after the long vacation, which Mr. D'Arcy and his daughter spent in Germany. Maude Jocelyn brought back with her to school a gold locket containing her brother's portrait. The trinket was of no small value, and Madame Dulcie, who like John Gilpin's wife, had a frugal mind, directed Miss D'Arcy always to bring it to her to be locked up after its childish owner had taken it off.

One night Maude went to bed early with some slight ailment, and Julie, who was directed to sit in the room in case she should want anything, could not resist the temptation of opening the locket and gazing once again on those too-well-remembered features.

She never quite knew how intensely she loved Keith until she sat there with his picture in her hands. She would have done anything in the world to possess the portrait; she would have valued it far more than his little sister. Maude

was sleeping peacefully. Julie held the likeness to her lips and pressed hot kisses upon the face.

"If only it were mine—if only I dared to keep it!" she breathed, speaking aloud in her agitation.

A little form rose up from the other side of the bed, and Ethel Devreux confronted her. The child's eyes gleamed with anger; she had crept upstairs to see after her darling Maude, and she was indignant with what she had heard.

"You are very wicked," she cried, quickly; "you pretend to love Maude, and you don't one bit. You only keep close to her that you may try and get her pretty things."

Maude stirred uneasily in her sleep, then relapsed into dreamland. The other two stood confronting each other, Ethel with flushed face and sparkling eyes, Julie with passionate scorn.

"Her pretty things!" repeated the half-pupil, disdainfully. "How dare you say such things, you little story-teller?"

She had gone on a wrong track. Sweet-tempered as she generally was Ethel had the blood of the Devreux in her veins. She came of a long line famed for their truth and honour.

"I never told a lie in my life," cried the child, indignantly. "Ask madame."

The door opened noiselessly and Madame Dulcie glided in. She had a habit of moving about softly—in fact, it was a saying in the house you never quite knew when to expect her. The sight amazed her. Her dull, lethargic half-pupil seemed turned into an avenging fury. Ethel, the best-tempered child in the school, was unmistakeably in a rage.

"Not here," said the principal, perceiving both were going to assail her with a flood of explanation. "You will disturb Maude. Come to the study."

They followed her there. Ethel, who was of a fearless disposition, and, besides, well acquainted with Madame Dulcie's justice, spoke first. She had gone upstairs to see after Maude. She did not think Miss D'Arcy would take care of her, for she did not really love her, though she pretended to.

"You are not keeping to the point, Ethel."

"I went in softly for fear I should wake Maude," went on the child. "Miss D'Arcy never saw me. She was sitting by the window. She had something in her hand that she was talking to and kissing. I felt sorry at first. I thought it might be her mother's likeness. Suddenly she cried out she would do anything in the world to keep it if only she dared, and I saw it was Maude's locket."

"Is this true, Miss D'Arcy?"

Julie attempted to speak, but she was not versed in deception. She stammered, hesitated, and her cause was lost.

"I see you cannot deny it," said Madame Dulcie, sternly. "I am more shocked than I can express. For your father's sake I shall take no notice of the matter, except requesting you to leave my house at once. In an hour's time a cab will be at the door to take you to Southvale."

Julie found voice.

"It is her fault," pointing to Ethel, "she has been against me from the first."

"I could not bear to see her pretend to be so fond of Maude," said Ethel, in excuse, "and I did not like her coming here; she was not one of us."

"Not one of you?" cried Julie, "you think me beneath you, you pretty, fair-haired doll. Because I have not got golden hair and blue eyes and cannot wear silk dresses, you fancy you can treat me as you like. Listen, I will never forgive you for to-night's work, never. I shall think no time too long, no waiting too tedious, if only in the end I can reap my vengeance. You have made me suffer, you shall suffer in your own turn, I swear it. There shall come a day when you shall remember to-night and wish you could undo its deed with tears of blood!"

Then silently she swept from the room, leaving Ethel Devreux weeping bitterly at Madame Dulcie's side.

No one at St. Alban's took leave of Julie D'Arcy. The principal explained to the pupils

and their teachers that Miss D'Arcy was obliged to return home at once, but she did not enter into any particulars, and Ethel, who seemed seized with a nervous terror, was equally silent.

When the cab came to the door a servant was sent to tell Miss D'Arcy, but no one went to bid her adieu. The page placed her box on the roof and closed the door after her. In perfect silence she drove away.

Though her attempt at becoming like other people had thus failed almost at the onset, Julie was not disheartened; she would try a foreign school next. French and German girls would be like those marble English. After all a taste of freedom was very precious, and she went up the steps of the house at Southvale with a lighter heart than would have been imagined possible. The landlady herself opened the door.

"Thank Heaven you've come, miss. We didn't think you'd get here so soon; it seems no time since we sent off the telegram."

"The telegram?"

"Why, I do believe you haven't had it after all. I wish I'd not spoken so sudden like, miss."

"What is the matter?"

"Well, miss, Mr. D'Arcy's not well. He was taken this morning with a strange attack, and the doctor says he's dying!"

(To be Continued.)

SCIENCE.

PROFESSOR LANGLEY communicated on March 21 to the French Academy of Science a memoir "On the Distribution of Energy in the Normal Solar Spectrum." He believes the total heat coming from the sun to the earth to be much greater than the highest estimates hitherto given. He also affirms that if all the solar radiations reached the earth the luminous sensation would be blue rather than white.

A PRACTICAL CALCULATING MACHINE.—Mr. Ramon Vera, of Wall Street, New York, has patented a calculating machine which is said not only to be on a new principle but also to be a really practical one. The essential features are a number of prisms perforated with holes of different sizes, and a series of tapering prisms which enter the holes more or less according to the size of the hole. With this machine Mr. Vera can add and subtract readily, and multiply and divide with equal facility.

LOCALISING BY THE EYES.—At the recent meeting of the Physical Society, Professor Helmholtz, of Berlin, gave an account of the factors which enter into our ability to fix the position and distance of an object by the eyes. That the binocular effect is not all-powerful is shown by the fact that single-eyed persons can estimate distance about as well as those with two eyes. A person suddenly blinded, however, has to acquire the new art of judging by one eye. This consists, according to Professor Helmholtz, of two elements, namely, the appearance of the objects with respect to other bodies, and the parallel of motion. The outlines of the more distant objects are always covered by those of the nearer ones where they cross, and hence the difficulty of recognizing that the image projected by a convex lens or a concave mirror is nearer to the observer than the lens or the mirror.

Further, the object which projects a shadow upon any surface is always situated before that surface. These two elements go to make up the appearance of the objects, and they are really overpowered by others, for example, stereoscopic combinations. This is demonstrated by Dove's stereoscope, an instrument composed of two rectangular prisms, and showing to each eye a reflected image inverted from right to left. The parallax of motion is seen as a shifting of the object, especially if it is near, or moving the head from side to side or up and down. This element also overpowers the stereoscopic combination of the images of the two eyes.

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[AN UNEASY CONSCIENCE.]

A WINSOME WIFE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"From Her Own Lips," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE COUNTESS OF TORONTO.

My only books
Were woman's looks,
And sorrow all they taught me.

WHATEVER ambitions desires the new Countess of Toronto might have had as to her success in the world of fashion, she must have been perfectly satisfied with the sensation she caused and the furor there was about her before she had been many days in England.

The old stories that were current about her—and they were innumerable and exaggerated to the very utmost—only served to render the spell of her witching beauty more potent almost before she herself arrived in England.

Her portrait was in the shop windows. Arthur Petronel, in the first flush of his happiness, had had her photographed by the best man he could find in the Canadian capital, and he had foreseen what a success she would be and sent copies over to England to be exhibited and admired.

The earl was disgusted and would have put an end to his wife's appearance in the windows side by side with professional beauties, but Stella seemed to rather like the notion of her beauty being paraded, and bade him never mind.

People would be sure to get hold of her face somehow, she said. When she was a girl she was always being painted, and it did not signify. It was rather nice to think that people admired her and put her in their albums; and so no notice was taken and the photographs were allowed to remain in the shop windows.

No more were to be taken for sale, that Lord Toronto was determined upon, much to his frivolous wife's disgust.

She would have liked nothing better than to pose for an artist to paint or photograph her, and that the picture should appear afterwards in the most frequented shops in London. She had no sort of reticence about her charms, for she had the vainest and emptiest head in the three kingdoms.

Her lord did not know this. To his infatuated eyes she was the most charming as well as the purest and best of women. The glamour had come back with the sight of her fair, false face, and he believed that he had won all of the happiness that the world had in store for him when he walked out of the church on his wedding morning with Stella on his arm, his wife.

She was to be presented at court next spring. Lady Beckenham was to attend both her and Lady Carita, who was to bend the knee at the first drawing-room after her marriage, which was very near now.

It was rather a relief to them all that the necessary preparations for that event took off something of what would have been the awkwardness of the arrival of the new countess.

It was amazing to see with what facility and unconcern she settled down into her new sphere. She moved about amongst the luxuries and splendour of her fresh life with all the aplomb of one born in the purple and trifled with costly things as though she had been accustomed to them all her life.

Her milliner, who prided herself on her discernment, declared when she was first introduced to the young countess, that it was easy to see she was no low-born creature such as her detractors had painted her. She knew how to order her dresses and selected exactly what she wanted without any difficulty. Any underbred person set down haphazard would have made mistakes, but Lady Toronto never blundered at all.

She issued her orders for her toilettes in a

queenly fashion that spoke well for the bill, and laid in stores of lace and lingerie with a recklessness that nothing but being to the manner born could account for.

She possessed a natural gift for dressing well, and she had resolved in the first days of her triumph that she would burst upon the London world the best-dressed woman in the society she had come to England to adorn.

It would have been better if she had acted differently, better if she had led a quiet, retiring life and not striven to court notoriety in any way. She might have saved herself a little perhaps of what befell her in the time that was coming with such rapid strides.

She foresaw nothing as she drove away from Madame Charlotte's with her worshiping husband by her side. Madame Charlotte was preparing the dresses she was to wear at the wedding, which was only a few days off now, and the reception dresses which were to astonish everybody by their beauty and the unique style of their arrangement.

"She has promised that not a creature shall see them till I wear them," she said to the earl. "She declares my taste is exquisite and that everyone will be sure to ask who designed my dresses. They are from pictures I remember in the old days in Rome. But, oh, Arthur!" and she squeezed her little hands in their delicate gloves together and looked up into his face with an expression of funny terror.

"Well, most arbitrary of women, what is it?" he asked. "What is wrong?"

"Nothing, but I am afraid the bill will be; she says—"

"Never mind what she says, child, so you are satisfied and look better than any other woman, though you can't help that. The bill will be my business, the dresses are yours."

"You are too good to me," she said, in a voice that trembled a little in spite of herself. "You don't know—"

"I know that Heaven has been too good to me in giving me my darling," was the loving reply. "Stella, the sight of you brought me

back to myself and civilisation again. I had promised to come home, but I should have gone back to the wilds again but for you, my darling."

"I will try and deserve it, Arthur. Ah, suppose something should come between us—that we should be separated; I should die."

"Child, what is to come between us? What can separate us? Are you not mine? My very own? Ah, my darling, what is it?"

For she had given a little cry and was cowering back in the carriage as though she were frightened.

"Nothing. It was only—"

"Only what?"

A man looking into that shop window there, the one where my pictures are. He turned as we passed and his face looked like the face of a dead person. It made me feel sick. Let us get out of this street."

The earl looked, but he could see no one like she had described, and he thought she must be ill, and bade the coachman drive fast and get into the park. The air there would do her good and bring back her colour, he told her.

It did so to all appearance, for she laughed and was herself again, and returned the greetings which met her on all sides with her usual bright smile.

She was certainly not well, her husband thought, or else she had been more startled than she chose to admit, for he could see that her smile was forced and her manner distract, and she seemed to be looking for someone all the time they were out.

So she was, seeking in the moving crowd for a face she knew only too well, and which she dreaded might appear even in the midst of the aristocratic throng in the Park, and come upon her like a Nemesis.

"You are tired, my darling," the earl said. "What you saw was fancy, depend upon it. Our imagination plays us strange tricks sometimes, you know."

"Yes," Stella replied, "it does, and I daresay I was fanciful. I am spoiled, Arthur, that is it. The change from a struggle for my own living to the luxury of your home and the shelter of your love is too much for me. I am like the Lady of Burleigh, overweighted, I think."

"Not like her, I hope, my darling." She died of her greatness; you must live and be my darling till death claims me too. I cannot imagine now what life could have been without you, Stella. If anything parted us I should go mad."

"Nothing can—nothing shall," she said, with a sick chill at her heart as she spoke. "Arthur, before Heaven I will try and be to you all that a woman should be to a man. Remember in the time to come that I vowed that and will keep my vow, if I may—if I may."

She burst into a passion of tears and sobs, and he drew her into the shelter of his strong arms and soothed her as a man knows how to soothe the woman he loves best of all on earth, and she wept out her excitement, whatever it was, and looked up into his face again and smiled her own witching smile that had come between him and everything else in the world, ever since he had held her in his arms on that eventful night when he and Leonard Warburton had listened to her fresh sweet voice on the fair ground at Ayr.

She had seen a face in the street that day. A man had turned and looked at her as she drove past in all the pride of her beauty, and he had stared at her with amazement in his face till the carriage was out of sight.

"It is her!" he muttered—"her own self. Where has she been? What has she done with herself while I have lived on a dog's diet and well-nigh starved? Who is she? What's her name? This is her in the shop window here, and that's her in that carriage, and where must I go to find her now? The fortune's coming, though it's been a weary time, and I've well-nigh gone into my grave looking for it; there ain't much of me now," and he slipped up his ragged sleeve, and looked with a laugh at an arm that was only a bone with a skin on it. But Zeph had starved before now and waited too, and the time comes to people that wait.

His appearance was so uncouth, and his manner of speech so odd, that a passing policeman turned to look at him, and having looked stopped and looked again.

"By Jove!" he remarked, apropos of nothing as it seemed, and then stared at the man as if he could not quite make him out.

"It is him," he said, as regardless of grammar as ever were the perplexed monks in Barham's famous legend, and then he touched the man on the shoulder.

"What are you doing here?" he asked.

"Minding my own business," was the prompt reply.

"It isn't minding your own business to go on like a lunatic on the edge of the pavement. I've seen you before, and if you don't mind I shall take you up for a rogue and a vagabond."

"No, you won't, because I'm neither. I'm in regular employment, and I've as much right to look into this shop window as anyone else, and I'm going in to buy something too."

He did not look much like a customer for a shop devoted to the fine arts, and he laughed at the policeman's look of wonder.

"I remember you," he said. "You saw me beg of a lady one day over yonder," jerking his hand southwards as he spoke. "I'm very fond of that lady, I am, and I'm going to buy her picture."

"Her picture?"

"Yes, this one—look here."

The policeman looked, and saw the carte of the new Countess of Toronto in all the glory of her feathered golden hair and artistic dress, and he stared at it like a man in a dream.

"By Jove!" he said again, "it is—it's Miss Ada Durand!"

"That's in," the strange man said—"Miss Ada Durand herself, that found her friends so quiet when I came in her way, and ran away and hid herself for fear I should call on her. She won't do it again."

"You won't call on her now?"

"Maybe I shall, and maybe I shan't," was the enigmatical reply. "She won't be so hard on me this time. I took her by surprise, you see, the last time, and poor relations aren't always acceptable."

"Relations! Are you a relation of hers?"

"Yes, a near one."

"Then I don't wonder she went away to get out of your road. I don't think I should be over-proud of you myself. It's all right, he only wants to buy som' thing," he added, as a shopman stepped forward to prevent the man from entering the shop, thinking naturally that he was a beggar. "He wants a carte of Lady Toronto."

"Smitten like everybody else," the shopman said, laughing, as he handed out a carte and received a very dirty shilling out of a dirtier pocket-handkerchief in return. "I am afraid her ladyship would not feel much flattered if she knew what awful cade buy her portrait."

She would not have been flattered in this instance. She would have cursed the fatal gift that had made her a mark for all eyes if she could have foreseen what the purchase of that little piece of pasteboard would bring about.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE PRETTIEST WEDDING OF THE SEASON.

When thy foot is at the altar, when the ring hath pressed thy hand,
When those thou lovest, and those that love thee,
Weeping round thee stand,
Oh, may the rhyme that friendship weaves, like a
spirit of the air,
Be o'er thee at that moment for a blessing and a
prayer.

THE bright August sunshine was streaming all over London and lighting even its dingiest alleys and lanes into something like life and beauty when the morning dawned that was to see Lady Carita Petronel "give her hand with her heart in it" to the man who had so long and so faithfully loved her.

Her heart was really in her hand now. The love that had seemed such an all-absorbing

passion for Noel Treherne was a thing of the past. It had really died the moment she heard of his marriage, and what she thought was affection still and a passion that would make her go down to her grave a lonely woman was really more the sting which the knowledge of her own folly had left behind it. She was shocked beyond measure at his terrible fate, but with the knowledge of his fate had come a sense of freedom, and since then she had scarcely given her old love a thought.

She knew now what love really was, the love that is not all romance, the affection that makes two hearts one and lasts till the grave closes over one or other of the pair that plight their troth at the altar. She knew Leonard Warburton's worth and she was happy, the happiest girl in all England, she told her brother when he kissed her the night before the eventful morning, and prayed for Heaven's blessing on her union.

"May you be as happy as I am, my darling," he said, and somehow a chill struck to Lady Carita's heart as he spoke.

Was he as happy as he appeared? she asked herself. Was his yellow-haired goddess all she seemed to her doting husband? Now it was all sunshine, she thought, but would it last? The vague feeling that had taken possession of her when she first saw Stella at the Nest came back to her now with full force in her daily intercourse with her brother's wife.

Lady Toronto was amiability itself. Everyone voted her the sweetest and most charming creature that had ever appeared to take the fashionable world by storm; but there was something more in her life than Carita could make out. She seemed to live in a state of expectancy. More than once her sister-in-law had seen the colour leave her lips and cheeks at some sudden and unexpected sound, to return again as quickly when the sound was explained.

Arthur saw nothing, that was very evident. To him she seemed all happiness and brightness, but his sister was convinced that there was something in her life that would come to light sooner or later. She told her betrothed husband of her feeling about Stella, and he did not laugh.

"I would have given my right hand to have been able to prevent the marriage, my darling," he said, gravely. "But we can do nothing, we must leave her to Heaven, and pray that Arthur may have strength given him to bear when the time shall come, poor fellow. The burden will be heavy, or I do not read the signs aright."

Strange words to use about a pair so happy and a creature so brilliant as the young Countess of Toronto, and Lady Carita looked at him in surprise.

"What do you know about her? What has she done?" she asked.

"I know nothing, and I hope I never may. But I fear and suspect. We have yet to learn what passed between the time of her being taken away from the Nest in that strange manner and her husband's death. She has turned the page in her life's history with a resolute hand, but I fancy that it will be turned back yet for the world to read. Don't think of her, dear; our lives and hers will be apart from tomorrow."

Apart from all but themselves Lady Carita hoped as she laid her head on his breast and let him take almost the last kiss before he kissed her at the altar—his wife.

He stayed with them till the evening was far advanced, chatting in the desultory way that comes of fatigue after unwanted excitement. The preparations for the morrow were all made, the wedding dress in all its bravery was laid out upstairs, and the bevy of bright girls who were to attend the bride on the morrow were all gossiping together somewhere.

It so happened that the family were alone. Lady Beekenham had a headache and was in her own pretty sitting-room, whither the others had come to have a parting gossip, and, as Carita declared, to say good bye to the dear old room.

Leonard Warburton almost wondered at his suspicions of the fair young countess as he

watched her moving so gracefully about in her simple home dress. There was nothing of the ambitious, wicked woman about her to-night. She seemed the very embodiment of goodness and simplicity, and looked like a pure angel in her white robes and delicate lace.

Their conversation turned on the proposed wedding trip, which was to be definitely decided upon after the travellers reached the Continent. They both declared they hated routes and fixed journeys, and preferred wandering about as they listed.

"Don't be surprised if you hear of us in Timbuctoo," Leonard Warburton said, with a laugh; "we may take a fancy for studying the lights and shades of life in Central Africa."

"Or East Cornwall," Lady Carita added. "I should like above all things to drop in on Dr. Brandspeth as we come home and surprise him."

The doctor was in town, he had come up for the wedding and was at an adjacent hotel, besieged by all sorts of people who wanted to see him.

"You would like Cornwall," she went on, turning to her sister-in-law, who was listening somewhat lazily to the conversation, in which she had very little share. "But perhaps you know it. Have you ever been there?"

"Where did you say?"

"Cornwall."

"No, I do not know that part of the country."

She was playing with a dainty little fan as she spoke, and she must have twisted it in some way, for it fell upon the carpet in scattered pieces. She laughed nervously as she picked it up.

"How careless of me," she said. "I don't think I quite heard what you were saying. I had gone off in a brown study."

"We were talking about Cornwall," Carita said. "We had quite an adventure there when we were exploring the hills, and we were all charmed with Dr. Brandspeth's place. Where are those photographs, auntie?"

Lady Beckenham pointed to a small portfolio, and Carita opened it and began to show her sister-in-law its contents.

"There, that's the place where we were caught in the storm," she said, and Stella looked at the towering masses of stone which stood out beautifully in the picture against the bright sky. "It is a wild and fearful place," she said, "something to remember for a lifetime. I am glad we saw it."

"I don't think I have any fancy for gruesome places," the young countess said, with a little shiver, "I am sure I should never care to see that one."

"This isn't so wild, but it is interesting to us," Carita said, producing another picture. "Dr. Brandspeth had it taken on purpose for us. There is no particular interest in the place to strangers. It is the abandoned mine buildings where we sheltered. There is the little corner where Leonard and I got in out of the wet, and there is the old counting-house where auntie and the doctor took refuge, and that black spot out there in the open ground—ugh! that is a horrid place—it is an open mine shaft, and we saw someone there—I always believed they tumbled in, for—"

She never finished the sentence, for her brother started from his seat with a cry of alarm and caught his wife as she was falling from her chair, white and still as a corpse.

"What have you been saying to her? What have you done?" he asked.

"Nothing; we were looking over these photographs," his sister replied. "There was nothing to make her faint in any of these."

It would seem not, the pictures were harmless enough, and Lady Toronto, presently recovering, was very angry with herself for having been so foolish, and said she ought to have gone to her own room an hour before, for that she had been feeling somewhat out of sorts all the afternoon.

"But I shall be all right after a night's rest," she said, with a smile, though it was a very sickly and feeble one. "You will see me quite myself to-morrow. No, you mustn't say good night, Arthur, dear, you are coming down again. There's nothing the matter, I will get Lady Beckenham to show me those photographs another time and tell me all about them. I really did not see one of them."

"They are always here for your ladyship to see whenever you choose," Lady Beckenham said, as she bade the countess good night. "But I don't believe you will ever look at them of your own free will," she added, as the door closed behind Stella. "It was the sight of them that made you ill whatever the cause might be."

Lady Toronto was as good as her word, and came downstairs the next morning in a ravishing toilette and her brightest smile to assist at the wedding. The smiles might have been a little forced, and the colour on her soft cheek somewhat fixed, but no one was to know that, unless indeed her maid suspected it; and she was the very soul of gaiety and brightness, and the observed of all observers after the beautiful bride.

The prettiest wedding of the season was the Lady Carita Petronel's. At least, so people said, and certainly the church looked like a brilliant flower garden with a bed of fair white flowers in the mist as the morning sun shone in on the assembled groups and seemed to sanctify the church's benison on the union of two loving hearts.

The coloured radiance from the great window over the altar bathed Lady Carita in a flood of golden light, and a long red ray passed over the heads of the group round the rails and made its way to the very back of the church; it looked like a blood streak, and somehow or other the countess caught herself following the line of light as the ceremony went on. Her thoughts were wandering sadly; she was thinking of the tour on the Continent that she was going to take very soon, and wondering whether the haunting fear that possessed her would leave her when England was behind her and no one who had ever known her likely to cross her path.

"I shall be glad to go," she thought, "very glad to go and be alone with Arthur. He will not believe anything they say, and the others mistrust me, I know they do. The bridegroom there thinks something, I don't know what—I should like to find out what is in his head. Ah, well, he is going away, I wish he would take his bride's aunt with him. If my Lady Beckenham can do me a mischief she will. But forewarned forearmed, my lady; you shall not have the chance."

The red streak of light had shifted a little, and the end of it rested on the head of a man who was sitting at the end of a pew by the door. Rather a strange person to come to a fashionable wedding, but he could not be turned out without creating more commotion than was seemly in a place of worship, and he had been allowed to remain.

His eyes met the beautiful ones that were wandering from the service, and an evil expression came into them.

"She knows me," he muttered. "Ay, you may turn pale, my lady, it will cost you something to get rid of me."

Stella, staring at the man, felt a slight touch on her arm, and turned her head to see her husband looking at her in alarm.

"What is it?" he asked, in a low tone. "What is the matter?"

"Nothing."

"You are as white as a corpse except for a spot on each cheek. People are looking at you. Turn this way."

"I am quite well, there is nothing the matter. I feel as if I was turning to stone, that is all."

She did not faint, and he was glad when he was once more in the carriage and her stony white face hidden from the remarks and astonishment of the crowd.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

AFTER THE WEDDING.

The last kiss is given, the last adieu sighed; The bridegroom's away with his beautiful bride.

EVERYBODY said what a pretty wedding it had been, and everybody said too what a pity it was that the young Countess of Toronto looked so ill.

Whatever had startled her in the church and made her turn so pale had seemingly left its effect. She did not regain her colour all the rest of the day. Nothing that either herself or her maid could do had any effect in removing the ghastly whiteness that had crept over her cheeks and made her look for a time more like a corpse than a living, breathing woman. She could not account for it in any way, she had felt a sudden chill, she said, as she stood there by the altar, and she had not been well the night before as they all knew, but she was quite herself again now, and it was very provoking that her colour would not come back.

She was the brightest and gayest of all the wedding party, and chatted merrily over her American experiences as a bride, and how she had been feted and petted by all the people she met after her wedding. She said nothing of her life before, or how she had come to meet her husband so opportunely. She was Countess of Toronto now and her antecedents did not matter.

Carita was very pale and quiet, too full of genuine emotion to have a word to say, as every young bride must be when she is bidding farewell to the home and the friends of her early life. Leonard Warburton was proud and happy, but his happiness was too deep for words. He said as much when he made the conventional speech and thanked his friends for their good wishes towards himself and his wife.

His wife! He could hardly realise his bliss yet. It seemed to him that it must be all a dream, and that the white-robed figure sitting with bowed head by his side could not be his very own—his till death should part them. The ladies liked him all the better for the emotion that trembled on his lips and well nigh choked his utterance, and his new brother gave him a grasp of the hand that spoke more than words the feeling that was uppermost at having him for a relation.

It was a tearful parting, and Mr. Warburton was glad to get his bride away from her loving friends. The countess's parting salutation was somewhat remarkable. Stella had drawn away from the rest of the family and was standing alone in one of the windows. When her sister-in-law came to her for the last good bye she held out her hand with a smile.

"Not like that, sister dear," Carita said, and folded her in her arms. "Kiss me and wish me happiness."

"Yes, I should like to kiss you," was the reply, in a choking voice. "It is like touching an angel's lips to meet yours. You will think of you at my best, Carita, in the time that is coming. You will believe that there is some good in me."

"All good, dear," Carita said, gently, though her heart belied her words as she spoke them. "You are Arthur's wife, and you will always be good and dear to me. Good bye, sister, and God bless you."

If she remembered her loving words afterwards it was to be glad she had spoken them, and happy to know that she had said or done nothing that could help to give a moment's pain to her brother's wife.

The languor that always comes after any unwanted excitement soon fell upon the household, and after the guests dispersed they separated and sought their own rooms, for the most part to rest and be a little quiet. The countess owned to being very tired indeed, and begged that she might be left alone for the rest of the day.

"Quite alone, Arthur dear," she said. "Indeed it is all I want. I am dreadfully sorry to break down like this, but remember how unused to gaiety I have been all my life. I think it is a little too much for me."

Lady Beckenham was quite knocked up, and said so, and after the breakfast was over and Carita and her husband had left she went to bed and was seen no more that day. Lady Toronto took a cup of tea by her dressing-room window, and then bade her maid remove her delicate dress and her jewels and replace them by a soft cashmere morning robe in which she could lounge and rest herself.

"My head aches dreadfully, Richards," she said. "Don't let anyone come near me."

"Not his lordship?" asked Richards, who often found his lordship a little in the way, he was so unfashionably fond of gossiping with his lovely wife.

"He won't come. I have been talking to him. He is gone down to his club. There's some exciting news from Africa, or India, or somewhere, and it has to be talked over."

She laughed as she spoke. She heard other wives complain of the fascinations of the clubs which took their husbands away from them. Her lord would never have gone near his if she had not sometimes driven him there. She had out-rivalled all the male gossips' haunts since her marriage. Her head was in a whirl to-night, and she wanted to be alone to think. Richards, nothing loth, departed to the region of the housekeeper's room, and Stella was alone. The laughter died out of her face as the door closed behind her maid, and she buried her head in her hands.

"Fool that I am," she muttered, "to be frightened at a face and an ugly look. It is nothing. Nothing can touch me. Am I not Countess of Toronto? The worst the world can say of me is that I was ambitious—heartless maybe, to marry so soon after my husband was killed. The world does not know how lonely and desolate I was. Perhaps I ought to have been wearing weeds and weeping over his grave even now. The year is not quite up yet. Come in."

Someone had knocked at the door and startled her from her reverie. To her surprise the housekeeper entered. She knew her by sight and that was all. She had had nothing to do with this imposing-looking old lady since her arrival in London, and she wondered very much what she could have to say to her.

"Mrs. Pevensley," she exclaimed, sitting up. "It is Mrs. Pevensley, is it not?"

"Yes, my lady."

"Do you want me?"

"Yes, my lady. I thought I had better come myself. I don't quite understand. But there's a man downstairs wants to see your ladyship, and—"

"A man?"

"Yes, my lady."

"What sort of a man? May I trouble you to give me that fan, Mrs. Pevensley? I feel hot. Why should you come to me about it? Of course I cannot see any man now."

"Not any man perhaps, my lady, but this one—I don't know what he wants—but I do feel thankful that Mrs. Richards did not hear what he said to me."

"Dear me, how very mysterious. Had you not better sit down? You seem frightened. Was the man abusive?"

"Not at all, my lady. I will tell you if you please," the housekeeper said, sitting down in the chair Stella indicated, for indeed she could hardly stand. "I thought he was a beggar at first, but he is neither beggar nor thief, I am sure."

The countess fanned herself languidly as she listened and lifted her eyebrows, as though she were hardly at all interested in what the housekeeper was saying, and Mrs. Pevensley went on.

"I was standing at the window of my room just now," she said—"it looks out on the garden, though perhaps your ladyship does not know that—and this man was crouching underneath."

"In the garden?"

"Yes, my lady."

"How did he get there?"

"I don't know. He begged me not to call out. He wanted no harm, he said, only to speak to me, and I felt somehow he was speaking the

truth. He mentioned your name, my lady, and said that which made me take him into my room and come here to you."

"What did he say? What is he like?"

"He is as uncouth a man as you can well imagine, deformed and red-headed, but not dirty. He says he wants to see your ladyship on a matter of business. You know what, and if you refuse him—"

"Well, what then? I think he must have been imposing on you. I know of no one that can have any business with me."

"He said he has. He told me that if you were at home and refused to see him, he would call out his business in the streets and make your name a byword and a scandal to all the world. He did not put it quite in that way, but that was his meaning."

"I'm afraid he's a madman, Mrs. Pevensley, and that he has been imposing on you."

"I said as much, my lady, and he said, 'Look here, ma'am, go to your lady and look her in the face and tell her that the man who watched her in the storm wants to speak to her now, and bid her refuse me if she dare.'"

She did look her lady in the face as she spoke and she saw her very lips turn livid. She marked the difficulty there was for the next words to frame themselves, and she knew that the man she had talked with was no impostor, insomuch as he had some powerful reason for wishing to see the beautiful Countess of Toronto.

"I had better see him, I suppose," she said, slowly, and as if she hardly knew what she was saying. "I should have been glad if the earl had been at home of course. I think I know now who the man is. Will you bring him up here, please, and let him see me alone if he wishes it. He will not hurt me. He is not quite right in his mind, but I can easily get rid of him now I remember who he is."

"Bring him here, my lady, to your room?"

"Yes. I cannot come down in this dress. Make haste; the sooner you bring him the sooner he will be gone. And keep the matter secret. It is not pleasant to have servants talking about all the poor people that come after one. I would rather my husband saw him of course, but I will not have him hanging about and talking of his antecedents and mine."

She seemed hardly to know what she was saying, and her cheeks blazed now with a furious excitement.

Mrs. Pevensley was troubled beyond measure, but she resolved to do as she was bid and bring the man up to her mistress's room. It was lucky so far that no one but herself had seen him, and she went down with a sad heart to fetch him.

"My poor master," she said to herself, remembering Stella's white face and frenzied manner, "there's trouble of some sort in store for him. I am sure of it."

She bade her uncouth visitor follow her quietly and make no noise, and he obeyed her to the letter.

"I don't want to be seen any more than she wants to see me," he said. "It's only a bit of business, that's all. She's a relation of mine, she is."

The countess had been a nobody Mrs. Pevensley knew, but she had hardly credited her with having relations of such a stamp as this, and she sighed as she thought of the degradation of the ancient house she had served ever since her girlhood.

"The man, my lady," she said, opening the door of Stella's room.

"Will you wait to let him out, please?" the countess said. "I shall not keep him long."

The housekeeper closed the door and Stella turned to her unwelcome visitor.

"Now then," she said. "What do you want?"

"Money."

"Of course. How much? For your silence—mind, your complete and entire silence—now and for ever?"

"A thousand pounds."

"I have not such a sum. I don't know where to get it."

"Get it from the man you have fooled into marrying you."

"I don't know how, I can't see what excuse to make. I have some here, the half of it perhaps. But I need not give you a penny that I know of. No one would believe your story for a moment. You have no witnesses, and your word would not go for much against mine—against the facts that I could produce."

"Oh, yes, I have a witness. I'm not the only one as knows."

Again the leaden hue came into the face of Lady Toronto and she seemed as if she were about to faint.

"What witness?" she gasped. "You were not alone there?"

"No, I wasn't, and the witness will be forthcoming whenever I choose to ask him. I think you'll give me the thousand pounds, Lady Toronto, for the sake of your husband's honour."

(To be Continued.)

OUR COLUMNS FOR THE CURIOUS.

A FISH WITH HANDS.—A most extraordinary creature was dredged up from the bottom of the sea, not long since, near the northern shores of Australia. The body was that of a fish, but, wonderful to relate, it had, in the place of fins, four legs, terminated by what might be called hands, by which it made its way over the coral reef. When placed on the skylight of the steamer, the fish stood upon its four legs a sight to behold. It was small, and something like a lizard, but with the body of a fish. The land animals of Australia are notorious for their peculiar forms and structure, but, according to the above, described before the Royal Society of London, they are even less nondescript than those inhabiting the Australia seas. Mr. White, a late member of the Australian Eclipse expedition, tells strange tales about rats. He says that a little island upon which he and his mates pitched their tents was overrun with them, and—which was most extraordinary—they were of nearly every colour, from black to yellow, and some were tortoiseshell.

ARTEMUS WARD.—Poor Artemus Ward. In our day there has been no more delightful humourist. When he died the press of England and America was filled with tributes to his memory. In New York a meeting of newspaper folks was held at which it was resolved that his memory should really and truly be perpetuated. The manner in which this was done is amusingly told in a Boston journal. "A few weeks since I passed a week's vacation at Waterford, and during my visit went to the village graveyard to view the last resting-place of Artemus Ward. With some trouble I found the grave, there being nothing about the plain white slab to distinguish it from the many similar ones around. While thinking and wondering that no monument had ever been erected to the humourist, a countryman approached, to whom I said: 'My friend, can you tell me how it is that Artemus has never had a monument erected to his memory?' 'Well, stranger, I guess I kin,' was the reply. 'You see after Artemus died, three or four hundred printer fellers down in New York city got together and passed some beautiful resolutions, saying that Artemus should have a monument, and they would pay for it then and there; and then they took up a collection which amounted to twenty dollars sixty cents, so I'm told; and since then this town hain't seen either the monument or the money; but, stranger, we did get a copy of the resolutions."

THE CHARACTER OF THE BOERS.—The character of the Boers, as well as their habits and customs (says Dr. Robert Brown in his "Countries of the World") is strongly impressed by their wanderings and sufferings. If one of the family is about to ride but a few miles beyond his own extensive holding, before leaving the house he

respectfully bids farewell to his father and friends with almost as much ceremony as a European would employ before taking a journey of many weeks' duration. In the same way persons, whether they be visitors, neighbours, or kinsmen, coming to a homestead greet each of the family on their first entrance under the roof, and are in turn shaken hands with by each and every member of the household. This custom arose from the meetings and partings of forty-four years, during which those who met met as persons delivered from great danger and those who parted parted as those who may meet no more. The Boers had few candles in the wilderness during their long and weary pilgrimage. A little coarse fat from slaughtered animals, with a bit of rag, made their only lamp. They consequently acquired the habit of retiring early to rest, daylight throughout its entire length being utilised for their labours. This habit with the necessity for early rising incumbent on herdsmen has clung to them; and it is but rarely you meet with a family that enjoys those pleasant evening hours so dear to Europeans, when amid comfortable light and fires, the labours of the day being at an end, the household devotes itself to the innocent pleasures of social and domestic intercourse.

SOLD AGAIN.—As a rather unscrupulous fellow named Ben was coming down town one morning, he met Tom and stopped him. "I say, Tom," he said, "here's a pretty good counterfeit dollar. If you pass it, I divide." "Let's see the plaster," said Tom, and after examining it carefully, put it into his pocket, exclaiming: "It is an equal division—half a dollar each." "Yes," said Ben. A few minutes afterwards he quietly stepped into the store of his friend Ben, and purchased half a dollar's worth of oysters, laying down the dollar to pay for them. The clerk looked at the coin rather doubtfully, when his suspicions were immediately calmed by Tom, who said: "There is no use in looking, for I received the coin from Ben himself not ten minutes ago." Of course the clerk with this assurance handed over the oysters and a half-dollar change; with this and the oysters Tom left. Shortly afterwards he met Ben, who asked him if he had passed the dollar. "Oh, yes," said Tom, at the same time handing over the half to Ben. That evening, when Ben made up his cash account, he was surprised to find the counterfeit coin in his drawer. Turning to his clerk he asked: "Where did you get this? Didn't you know it was counterfeit?" "Why," said the clerk, "Tom gave it to me, and I suspected it was fishy, but he said he had just received it from you, and I took it." The whole thing had penetrated the brain of Ben. With a peculiar grin, he muttered "Sold again!" and charged the oysters to profit-and-loss account.

EMPLOYMENT FOR GIRLS.—The remunerative employment open to girls, such as post office and telegraph clerkships, all demand the preliminary course of sound and efficient training. The system of open competition is to be applied to appointments, rendering this special preparation more than ever necessary. Of the medical profession it is needless to say that very hard work and determined perseverance will alone compass the training required. We find therefore, on investigation, that many more spheres of work are open to girls than there were in bygone times, and that as a natural result there are more workers than there ever were. The inevitable tendency of this state of things is to depreciate the value of the incompetent and leave the prizes in the hands of those who are most qualified to hold them, and indeed it would be well for girls to remember that their claim for remunerative work can only be established by their proved ability to perform it.

SOMETHING ABOUT ICE.—Beside the fact that ice is lighter than water, there is another curious thing about it—namely, its purity. A lump of ice melted will always become purely distilled water. When the early navigators of the Arctic seas got out of water they melted fragments of those vast mountains of ice called icebergs, and were astonished to find that they yielded only fresh water. They thought that they were frozen salt water, not knowing that they were formed

on the land and in some way launched into the sea. But if their original opinion had been right, the result would have been exactly the same. The fact is that water in freezing turns out of it all that is not water—salt, air, colouring matter, and all impurities. Frozen sea water makes fresh water ice.

RATS WHO ENJOYED FUN.—A good rat story is told by a lady who lives in Baltimore, which shows that rats have a kind of humour about them at times which they will exercise even to the extent of forgetting their plundering propensities. In the house of this lady was a child's rocking horse, and every night the rats would jump on the rocking horse and start it rocking and rock it for hours, seemingly with the greatest enjoyment in the world. At first, hearing the noise, the people could not imagine the cause, and did not know but that the spirits had a hand in it, but when they cautiously peeped out and saw the performance it became one of the marvels of the neighbourhood to see the rats in the gambols enjoying themselves, laughing and having their fun rocking the smooth turf.

FLORIDA.—The time was when Florida was an immense sand-bar stretching into the Gulf of Mexico, probably as barren as can be conceived. But in the semi-tropical climate under which it exists in the course of ages the seeds carried to its shores by the sea, and the winds, and the myriads of birds which find it a resting place have clothed it with luxuriant vegetation, interspersed with tracts of apparently barren sand. It is a land of peculiar scenery, which the pencil of the artist has heretofore scarcely touched. Its main features illustrate the absurdity of the common notion that the landscapes of tropical and semi-tropical latitudes are superior in luxuriance of vegetable production to those of the temperate zones. The truth is that in the hot regions it is only when there is constant moisture that there is a strong and rank growth of plants.

EPICRAM ON AN INFANT.—The late Sir William Jones, the eminent Indian officer and diplomatist, wrote the following epigram—one of the most exquisite things of its kind in the English language—on an infant:

"On parent's lap a naked, new-born child,
Weeping thou sat'st while all around thee
smiled;
So live that, sinking to thy last long sleep,
Calm thou mayst smile while all around
thee weep."

The Greeks were the great masters of epigram. Here is a modern English one: "Mr. Blank," said a beautiful lady, "what is this new electric light?" "Your eyes," he replied. Not bad.

LINK BY LINK.

BY

A POPULAR AUTHOR.

CHAPTER XIII.

Ne'er again shall you behold her
Loved and fair.
Never shall your arms enfold her,
Hidden, where
Naught can weary heart or head:
She is dead.

"STAND back, all of you, and give him air," cries a pompous voice. "De-aw ladies, there is no occasion for alarm. It is merely a case of temporary syncope, the effect of undue stimulation of emasculated cerebral functions. We must—aw—get him back to The Hall."

"Don't you mean to bring him round fust?" inquires Mr. Blunt.

"No, sah," replies the first speaker, a loosely-built man in a shabby frock-coat and pepper-and-salt trousers, very baggy at the knees—"no sah. The jolting of the—aw—the chair and the breezy—aw—the breezy breath of Nature, will act as recuperative agents. We must—aw—get him back to the Hall."

Removing his finger from the pulse of the unconscious baronet he looks grandly into the frightened faces around. Releasing the bottom button of his threadbare coat he gropes for and produces a tarnished silver snuff-box, and with a sounding sniff applies a pinch to either nostril of his rubicund nose.

Then he extends it, with the bearing of one who is supremely master of the situation, to Simeon Blunt, who appreciates the civility so little that with a backhanded blow of his huge paw he sends the tarnished snuff-box high above the heads of the bystanders, filling the air with pungent rappee.

"I 'spose you'd keep puttin' fresh soil to the roots o' them grog blossoms o' yourn if the man was dyin'!" growls Mr. Blunt, savagely, as, applying his strength to the back of Sir Marmaduke's chair, he wheels it gently over the smooth turf.

"Mad—stark, staring mad!" mutters the disgusted medico, stooping to recover his property.

"Mad indeed!" assents Lady Knollys, witheringly, recalling that opprobrious appellation, "painted popinjay," so unceremoniously bestowed upon her by the soi-disant clergyman. "Follow him, sir, and take care my husband is not a sufferer from his violence. Powerful remedies will not be needed; Sir Marmaduke is subject to these attacks. You are a medical man, I presume?"

"Doctor Evans, my lady—Evans, of Duffelpool. The patient shall have unremitting attention," answers the shabby man, with importance, as, hurrying after the receding chair, he inwardly blesses his lucky stars that he came upon the spot in the very nick of time, and that his more reputable rival, Dr. Gwynne, was called away to a labour case half an hour ago.

Dr. Evans, of Duffelpool, familiarly known as Dr. Tom, will make unlimited professional capital for many months to come, by *viva voce* reports of his skilful treatment of Sir Marmaduke Knollys, Bart., under this extraordinary and unprecedented seizure.

And in truth the baronet looks ill enough with his ghastly face, from which every tinge of colour has faded, leaving it livid and death-like. Crimp, the valet, and Chandos Knollys are supporting the heavy head, and the former is loudly lamenting that he failed to bring out the strong smelling salts which have always proved efficacious in similar emergencies.

They are not needed. All too soon, if the look of sickly apprehension in his blood-shot eyes can be trusted, Sir Marmaduke rallies to a perception of what is passing around him.

"Where—what—where is—" he mutters, incoherently, with vacant feebleness.

"I am here, Sir Marmaduke," answers Dr. Tom, promptly, stepping forward. "In the absence of—aw—your own medical adviser I have instructed—"

"Take that prating hidgit out o' the way, somebody," growls a deep voice from behind the chair, and at sound of it the baronet starts and trembles, and his eyes close once more as though a relapse were imminent.

But he does not faint again. Slowly the purple hue returns to his swollen features, and their ghastliness disappears. It is evident that the attack is over, and Chandos Knollys, who has been showing symptoms of restlessness, is the first to recognise the fact.

"You look more like yourself now. I think I had better go back to the mater and tell her you are better," he suggests, and Sir Marmaduke assents with a nod.

So the son, impatient of the brief interruption to his diversions, hurries back to a spot where he may again become observed of all observers—the most important personage in an assemblage convened to do him honour—and the father is driven gently along the gravelled walks of the geometrical flower-garden and installed in his favourite room, unmattered save by the valet who waits upon him for hire, the doctor who has in prospect both pelf and reputation, and the strange man of incongruous attire, whose very ministrations have the force of a silent threat.

"You can clear out, both on yer," says the

latter, pointing to the door. "Me and Master 'Duke here has got a little matter o' business to talk over, private and confidential."

"Mad, quite mad—an escaped lunatic, I should say," mutters Dr. Tom, and certainly Mr. Blunt's behaviour is suggestive of mental aberration.

He has unbuttoned his stiff collar, and has torn off his black gloves, throwing each article to a corner of the apartment. And now, as he stands forth with a huge red hand extended in dismissal, his deep-set eyes glow with repressed ferocity.

"You may leave us. I will ring if I require attention," says the baronet, and at that confirmation of the madman's command the valet and the doctor retire, marvelling.

Then Simeon Blunt, hardly waiting for the door to close, wheels sharply round and brings down that red fist of his on the table beside which he stands, with a force which seems almost sufficient to shiver the solid wood.

"Where is she—what have you done with her?" he cries. "Open your mouth, 'Duke Knollys, and tell me—quick—or by the Heaven above us I'll—I'll—"

"She is dead," answers the baronet, solemnly, and at that brief sentence his companion recoils a step, and, sitting down upon the nearest chair, stares blankly at Sir Marmaduke, with eyes of incredulous dismay.

"Dead—dead!" he whispers.

"She died within a year."

"I don't believe it," shouts Mr. Blunt, fiercely. "It's a trick—a lie—an infernal juggle. Why didn't you tell me? Why did you send me away, fancying her well and happy, when we met afore?"

"Because it was better you should think so. It could have served no good end to tell you the truth. I hoped you would never discover it."

"Ay, that I believe. You didn't want me to know as another woman were put in her place, and another woman's son, sneerin', kid-gloved, lack-a-daisical young puppy, were lordin' it where the children she would naturally have bore you should ha' had the rule. I misdoubt you, Master 'Duke—I misdoubt but you've hidden her somewhere, that you are keepin' her out of her rights, poor lass."

"Sim Blunt," interrupts the baronet, quietly, but with such intensity of feeling that the whisper subdues and dominates the other man's loud vehemence—"Sim Blunt, I would to God your words were true."

"You have seen my wife—you have seen my son," he continues. "You see me lying here a helpless mass of flesh, broken in health, broken in temper, with one foot in the grave. Are wife and son any great comfort to me, do you think, Sim Blunt?"

The other listens, angrily suspicious, but impressed in spite of himself.

"It is an old sorrow, but it is a sorrow still. For twenty years and more it has been my companion, day and night, Blunt, day and night. There may yet be long years before me (you and I are much of an age), but I tell you truthfully I would give them all (if it were possible to bring her back to life) for a bare three months of existence brightened by her love."

"You must ha' been in a precious hurry to fill her place," growls Mr. Blunt, with resentful compassion.

"When a man loses a limb, a part of himself, his own flesh and blood and bone, he knows it can never be replaced, but he hastens to provide a substitute. It was only six months after her death that I married Lady Knollys—"

"A werry ledien limb you must ha' found her," interposes the other, grimly.

"I have not known a day's happiness since."

It is a sad confession. Simeon Blunt's gaze wanders round the room, noting the fineness of its proportions, the elegance of its furniture and its decorations, the presence of every comfort and luxury with which wealth may minister to mind and body diseased.

It settles upon the massive head, lying so heavily and so despairingly amongst the silken cushions. Many a line is there, traced legibly upon those swollen features, to tell of evil pas-

sions, but there are yet more which speak of cruel suffering and lasting unhappiness. And there is something besides, a look of disquietude, of suspense, and even of fear, arousing mistrust which had almost been lulled to sleep.

"Why didn't you tell me all this afore?" he cries, sharply. "Curse you—you are keeping something back even now."

"I was afraid. Of that sad, sweet chapter of my life, which her death closed, my wife and son are entirely ignorant. For twenty years I have not known a day's happiness, but if the story were to reach their ears I should never know a day's peace. I am afraid still lest you should publish it. We were enemies in the old days, Sim Blunt."

"Not after I found as you meant her well. Never after that, Master 'Duke," says the other, brokenly.

There is silence between them, a long silence, punctuated by the hoarse clamour of distant cheers.

Sir Marmaduke Knollys lies back upon the pillows of his roomy chair with closed eyes, as though the excitement had completely exhausted him, and Simeon Blunt stares at him fixedly, more in pity than in anger. Then he rises from his chair and picks up his shovel hat in act to depart.

"I ain't a-goin' to make no mischief between you and the painted woman," he says, solemnly. "If so be as you've lived with her all these years and never durst trust her with the knowledge of what your life was afore you met her, there's been punishment enough already in a marriage like that without me making matters worse. And I ain't a-goin' to ask whether you made the poor child as was a kinder helpmate happy or miserable for the few months she were spared to you; that's a question your own conscience must have asked many a time since. I shan't trouble you no more, Master 'Duke. I don't s'pose we shall ever meet again till the three of us stand face to face where all wrongs will be put right. There's only two things I would like to know afore I go."

"What are they?" murmurs the baronet, feebly.

"What did she die of, poor lass?"

It is a simple question, put very quietly and unobtrusively in a solemn, broken voice, but at the sound of it Sir Marmaduke Knollys starts in his chair as though it had been a blow or an electric shock. Were not Mr. Blunt's eyes full of unwanted moisture, which the knuckles of his huge red hand are stealthily brushing away, he could not fail to note the perturbation it causes.

"What did she die of?" he repeats, presently, and this time he notes how white his companion's face has grown, as though another fainting fit were imminent.

"Of what you would call galloping consumption," is the tardy reply.

"Where have you laid her?"

A shiver runs through the baronet's bulky frame, great drops of cold perspiration stand out on his forehead—it is evident that the protracted interview is trying him beyond his strength.

"Where have you laid her? Where is her grave?" asks Mr. Blunt, with rough pity in his tones.

"In the little churchyard at Braxton."

"Anywhere near the big yew-tree?" inquires Simeon Blunt, dreamily. "I remember bein' at Braxton once, and strollyin' into the churchyard. A peaceful-lookin', pleasant spot, specially near the old yew."

"She lies just under the old yew," says Sir Marmaduke, rallying himself, apparently, with a desperate effort, and weakly unclosing his bloodshot eyes. "I cannot talk much more, Blunt, my strength is nearly gone."

"There ain't no call for you to talk any more. I'm sorry to have worried you," replies Mr. Blunt, in gruff apology. "I'm goin' cut quiet-like by the winder, and I'll shake hands if ye like afore I go. We'll let by-gones be by-gones. I don't want to quarrel with a man as looks a'most at the last gasp."

So they shake hands in that farewell which is to be for ever, and the baronet, left alone once more, lies thinking—thinking.

He rallies with surprising speed for one supposed to be utterly strengthless and prostrated; rallies sufficiently to propel himself across the room by working the lever-like handles of his chair until the bell rope is in his grasp.

"I want to despatch a telegram. Give me a printed form and writing materials," he says to Crimp, who answers the summons.

"May Doctor Evans come in, Sir Marmaduke?"

"Doctor Evans! Who in the name of wonder is he? Certainly not."

"Evans of Duffelpool, Sir Marmaduke," says a bland voice in the doorway. "The—aw—the maniac, I might say, has departed I perceive. I waited in an adjoining apartment, fearing—aw—fearing violence."

"He is quite harmless. Excuse me, Doctor Evans, I have neither time nor desire for conversation at this moment."

"If I might—aw—be permitted to prescribe—"

"No, sir. I am accustomed to these attacks, and have my regular remedies."

"Then I will no longer intrude," says Doctor Tom, bowing himself from the room with crest-fallen expedition.

"Let a groom ride off with this instantly," commands the baronet, rapidly dashing off a message and folding it.

"It's only to some lawyer chap," comments Mr. Crimp presently, with ludicrous disgust, as he halts in the hall for a surreptitious perusal of the document. And verily Mr. Crimp does well to be angry, for if it indeed relates to the second appearance of the extraordinary visitor he might reasonably expect to find a more startling communication than the following:

"SIR MARMADUKE KNOLLYS,

"To M. Sharp, Solicitor,

"Lincoln's Inn Fields.

"I want to confer with you upon a matter of business. Come by first train in the morning."

CHAPTER XIV.

How happy could I be with either
Were t'other dear charmer away.

The substantial eating and the heavy drinking, the toasts and the speechifying, the cricket, the flat races, and the rustic games of every description which have made the afternoon pass merrily upon this the celebration of Chando Knollys' majority are at an end. But in the estimation of three-fourths of the many hundreds of people who have assembled to gratify themselves and to honour him the most enjoyable part of the fete has yet to come. There still remain the open-air dancing and the fire-works.

Sir Marmaduke has spared no expense to insure the success of festivities ill health must assuredly prevent him from sharing. Open house has been kept, viands, liquor, amusements have been provided with princely prodigality. A regimental band (at whose brilliant uniforms the chaw-bacons stare with admiring awe) is in attendance, and the very pyrotechnist who superintended the last display of rockets, catherine-wheels, and blazing many-coloured devices at the Crystal Palace, has been secured for the occasion. The day has been fine, the merry-making has been genuine, and praises of the baronet's liberality are on every lip.

It is a bright picture, but it has its sad side which only the thoughtful spectators see and only the well-informed spectators appreciate fully. Not to many of the hurrying crowd does it occur to ask what were the real feelings of the helpless invalid whose wine has flowed like water, whose gold has been spent like brass, when servants slowly wheeled his chair into the ruby sunshine, and, lying back upon the silken cushions, he realised that his kingdom was passing from him.

Not to many has it occurred to inquire whether it be seemly that neither son nor wife

should have stolen away, if only for a few minutes, from the gay throng to ascertain by personal observation that Sir Marmaduke has rallied satisfactorily from the fainting fit induced by the unwonted excitement.

Neither Chandos nor Lady Knollys considers the sacrifice a necessary one; neither would make the sacrifice, particularly at this moment, when the dancing is about to begin.

Chandos, dressed as usual within an inch of his life, is drawing on a new pair of gloves (the second to-day), and is affixing a fresh button-hole of flowers (the third to-day) presented by Mademoiselle Millefleurs a few minutes since. My lady is bowing her acknowledgments to Lord Talbot, a neighbouring magnate, who solicits the honour of her hand for the first quadrille.

My lady's toilette is a most becoming one, and the leaden sallowness of her complexion has been improved to such an extent by mademoiselle's skilful hand that Simeon Blunt's rough sarcasm, however impolite, was not untruthful when he described her as a "painted poppinjay."

Mademoiselle is one of the best-dressed women present, although her costume, of the cheapest material, is simple in the extreme. Chandos has told her so, adding that she looks as though a lady as the rest of them, and mademoiselle has replied that her family, reduced to poverty and to servile occupations, is notwithstanding of the old nobility, a fiction she has repeated so frequently for the last month that not only has it impressed him hugely but she herself has almost learned to believe it.

For all that he does not linger beside her after the gift of flowers. Many eyes are watching his every moment for one thing—for another he has a vague feeling of danger in the growing fascination the Frenchwoman exercises over him. He goes across to May Pole-Gell, recognising in her presence a counter fascination and a legitimate one. It is May Pole-Gell whom he selects from all the ladies present with whom to open the ball.

The first quadrille is rather a formal and stately affair in which the dancing is by no means general. The sons and daughters of the labourers do not know the figures, the sons and daughters of the farmers are shy for the most part at this early stage, and prefer to stand by and watch the gentlefolk disport themselves upon the velvet sward. Miss Pole-Gell's heart thrills with pride and pleasure as the young heir draws her hand within his arm and leads her to the place of honour.

After all he is Chandos Knollys, the heir to a baronetcy and many thousands per annum, between the prospective and the actual possession of which stands only a life which grows daily more fragile, whilst she is only May Pole-Gell, the daughter of a poor clergyman, whose means would barely support them in comfort but for Uncle John's liberality.

Moreover, the girl is ambitious, and the quietude of existence in a country rectory barely contents her. Her little head has been filled from childhood with dreams of the splendour of her progenitors, for the Rev. Pole-Gell's great failing is pride of race, and from childhood up she has been her father's confidante. Outlanders know him for a bland but dignified gentleman of bookish tastes, one apt to lapse into a brown study, and to seclude himself overmuch amongst his volumes of Greek and Latin and Hebrew; but May knows him for a man proud to excess of what his ancestors were in olden time, and of the fact that although they married again and again unwisely, for love, not wealth, no union with a person of ungenteel blood has ever impaired the purity of their descent.

Sympathising to the uttermost, inheriting to the full his pride of race, dreaming her dreams in the seclusion of the village rectory, not only of the past but of the future, what wonder that May Pole-Gell has remembered that marriage with Chandos Knollys would place her in a sphere which birth and education have alike fitted her to adorn?

What wonder that when he chooses her from amongst the many fair girls who have assembled to celebrate his coming of age and leads her to a set, in which dance six other people who re-

present all that is to the Loamshire mind the ne plus ultra of human grandeur, the very salt of the earth, her cheek flushes and her eyes brighten at the gratifying distinction.

Chandos Knollys shows at his best. The excitement has temporarily fretted away the cold superciliousness of his dandyism. He bears himself gracefully and gallantly. A murmur runs through the crowd of rustic lookers-on to the effect that they make a suitable and well-matched couple. May hears it and blushes crimson. Chandos hears it and asks himself whether it would not be wise to fix his volatile fancy upon this sweet, pure girl, who is in every way so charmingly fitted to be his wife.

The quadrille is over, and a polka commences. This time his partner is a rustic beauty, who is quite content with the honour of the selection, and will not tax him much in the matter of conversation. He talks to her carelessly, in a fragmentary way, but he thinks still of May Pole-Gell.

He considers himself well versed, theoretically and practically, in the emotion called love. This young prodigal of one-and-twenty has flirted much with girls of humble station, and one small passion has driven out another. All former affairs de cœur have ceased to interest him since he commenced to attempt the conquest of Lavinie Millefleurs.

That attempt has, to all appearance, been an utter failure, and in making it he has himself been conquered. Away from her he is restless and unhappy; in her presence, exposed to her banter, persistently, though not unkindly, mocked and kept at arm's length, he is angry and unhappy still.

Applying former experience to his present predicament, he believes that in Miss Pole-Gell's society he could console himself for the Frenchwoman's coldness, and in time forget her. But to cultivate Miss Pole-Gell's society is impossible unless they become engaged. Would it not be supremely wise to ask her to be his wife?

Mentally debating that question, he asks her for more dances than May would concede were she not piqued by the fact that Colin Cathcart has been holding aloof all day, and that since the dancing commenced he has not once solicited her hand.

In her indignation she is very gracious to Chandos Knollys, and people begin to whisper. Mademoiselle Millefleurs looks on apparently unmoved, but her small, white teeth, so faultless in their regularity, are clenched savagely, and her firm little mouth looks firmer than ever it did before.

It is very hot exercise this July evening, and unlimited fluid refreshment is obtainable in the marquee. Chandos has imbibed quite as much champagne as is good for him, and after each visit Miss Pole-Gell's star-like eyes appear to shine with greater lustre, and her beauty becomes more entralling.

He begins to feel thoroughly fortified against mademoiselle's fascinations, so much so that he determines he will dance with her by way of experiment.

"One dance, Lavinie," he says, patronisingly, approaching her with glass in eye and offering his arm.

But the girl looks at him with contemptuous coldness until the arm and the eyeglass drop simultaneously to his side and supercilious assurance fails him.

"Non, monsieur," she answers, curtly. "You shall dance—dance—dance—with your Miss Pole-Gell, but with me—jamais."

With a haughty inclination of her little well-poised head, the soubrette turns away, and Chandos, more nettled than he would like to own, looks about him for May, and determines that he will act upon the advice so ungraciously given.

To his disgust, he sees her in the act of laying her hand upon Colin Cathcart's sleeve, and allowing his arm to encircle her waist.

It is a dreamy waltz that the band is playing, a soft and tender movement, with a splendidly accentuated beat. Chandos stands watching with gloomy disgust the gyrations of the man who has forestalled him.

He is in a mood to detect and harshly criticise a false step, but he is forced to admit that this stranger waltzes perfectly. Upon May's face is an expression of utter pleasurable abandonment, upon Colin's one of utter and ardent devotion. The watcher feels a pang of fierce, sharp jealousy, that passion "cruel as the grave."

He experienced a sensation of annoyance the morning he met them driving together in Mrs. Burgess's gig, but now he is fiercely and resentfully angry, and in the midst of his anger a resolution is born.

There shall be no further rivalry of any description between himself and the young engineer. This very evening, before the fete is at an end, he will obtain Miss Pole-Gell's promise to become his wife.

Another visit to the marquee—another glass of champagne inspires additional courage. It is growing dark; soon the display of fireworks will begin. When he has finished the bottle he is yet more bitterly annoyed to discover that the Rev. Pole-Gell, his daughter, and Colin Cathcart have disappeared. The band also are shifting their quarters; the people are moving away to the spot which has been decided upon for the exhibition.

It lies behind The Hall, amongst the dark woods which form so effective a background seen from Astonburne. The spectators are to stand on one side a great sheet of ornamental water, the pyrotechnist and his assistants on the other.

There Chandos finds the little lady of whom he is in search. It is quite dark now in this place completely surrounded by huge trees. May is excited and eager as a pleased child, and under pretext of placing her in the best position to be secured, he induces her to mount a block of wood in an angle of the boat-house, and stations himself by her side.

It is a clever coup, for whilst they retain their respective positions he secures a monopoly of her conversation, and she must listen to anything he may think proper to say without the option of moving off.

Whizz! Cr-a-a-ck! Cr-a-a-ck!

A rocket cleaves the blackness of the firmament, attains its highest altitude, and, descending, breaks into a hundred beautiful stars. A murmur of wondering delight breaks from the rustic throng, and Chandos Knollys gropes for Miss Pole-Gell's hand and presses it, to the little lady's indignant surprise.

Whizz! Whizz! Whizz!

Fresh rockets, a fresh seizure of the gloved hand, which had been snatched away, and a forcible retention thereof.

"Mr. Knollys, allow me to pass you. I will stand by papa," says May, haughtily, still endeavouring to free her imprisoned fingers.

"Don't, May—dear May. I want you to be my wife," implores the elevated lover, in an audible whisper.

"You are hurting me," cries the girl, with the instinct of feminine diplomacy.

Here, awaiting acceptance, is a prize, the greatness and the desirability of which she has long admitted, yet her first emotion is one of invincible repugnance, her next the desire to procrastinate.

"Be my"—hiccup—"wife, dear May," urges the impassioned suitor, pressing his lips to the gloved fingers he is forcibly retaining.

And at that very instant, upon the other side of the artificial lake, a match is applied to some chemical preparation, which, burning fiercely, illuminates the whole scene with a ghastly bluish glare.

The effect, so far as the water and the trees are concerned, is charming, but one person in the excited crowd happens to be looking, not in the direction of the pyrotechnist, but towards Miss Pole-Gell upon the block of wood.

In that horrible moment she becomes aware that Colin Cathcart's eyes, at all events, have described a theatrical incident in Chandos Knollys's wooing. Also in that moment, at sight of Colin Cathcart's face, the girl remembers how, talking together in the gloaming, he showed her worthier ambitions than these of rank and



[ENVY, HATRED, AND MALICE.]

wealth, and made her feel ashamed of her own littleness.

"I dislike and despise you, and I am sure you have been drinking too much," she cries, angrily, snatching away her hand and springing from the block of wood upon which he had forced her to remain.

Then rises an involuntary howl of anguish, for, svelte though she be in figure, Miss Pole-Gell is heavier than most people would believe, and in leaping she has descended upon Chandos Knollys's favourite corn, protected only by the thin leather of his tight, varnished boot.

A wonderful device is burning and blazing on the further shores. It consists of the Knollys coat of arms with the Knollys motto under it—"Cor unum, via una." Chandos has mounted the deserted block, and he stands staring in sullen wrath.

A girl has crept close to his elbow, a girl who knows more than he would imagine of the advances he has made and the humiliation he has experienced during the last half-hour. As he turns his head gloomily the light falls upon her face. It is Lavinie Millefleurs.

She is looking at the display of fireworks, not at him—she appears unconscious of his proximity. Illuminated in so peculiar a fashion the pretty head, rising from shapely shoulders, shows to advantage; it has never looked more fair. The expression of her face is dejected and sad.

"Lavinie," he whispers, "step up beside me. There is ample room for two upon the block."

But instead of complying, the girl, after one sorrowful glance, turns and moves away. Then Chandos Knollys, angered almost to desperation, jumps down and follows her.

She has skirted the boat-house and has halted only a dozen yards away, where the trees grow thick and low. The black waters of the lake stretch to their feet, but the view of the opposite shore is obscured. They are only a few yards from a dense crowd, yet they stand in perfect solitude, wrapped round by the darkness.

"Why do you avoid me? Why would you not dance with me?" he cries.

"You had your Mees Pole-Gell," says the girl.

Then Chandos Knollys relieves his wounded feelings with an oath, coupling May's name with it.

It is just as well the solitude is so perfect, for if Colin Cathcart had chanced to stand at his elbow and to hear that execration, the heir would probably have found himself taking an involuntary lesson in the art of natation about that time.

"And that I avoid you it is better. I desire it, monsieur."

"Nonsense, Lavinie. Why should we not be friends?"

"Friends! Ah, mon Dieu! it is as the friendship of the wolf for the lamb, n'est-ce pas? To avoid you, monsieur, that is what I desire. Tomorrow I go to demand of miladi my congé. Then it is finished, we shall meet again nevare—nevare."

"I will be hanged if we do not. I love you, Lavinie, with my whole heart."

"C'est possible," retorts the Frenchwoman, with a certain sense of humour. "Mais, Monsieur Chandos, that heart is so small, it is as the heart of a flea."

"Now look here, let us talk sensibly," suggests the young man. "As I have told you a hundred times before, and as I tell you again, I love you. But whether or not you have the slightest scrap of affection for me I am as ignorant as the man in the moon."

"On dit," says the Frenchwoman, "when ignorance ees bliss, to be wise it ees la folie."

"Well, I am tired of la folie. Show that you care for me. Put yourself under my protection — Stop, where are you running? You shall not go, Lavinie."

"I go to escape insult," answers the girl, firmly. "Monsieur Chandos, you have made your petition, it is that we be friends. Go you to your Mees Pole-Gell, to the men who speak in high voice their orations about the heir, to the crew who presently will applaud with their acclamations English which split the trout.

And I—I will go to my service of miladi, to my chambre à coucher, and to-morrow to my life honest and pure, respecting still myself and you. So shall we yet be friends. Hold not my arm, monsieur. I have rested already too long. Let me go."

The display of fireworks had ceased. Somebody is making a speech about Sir Marmaduke and Lady Knollys and the young heir, expressive of the gratification and the gratitude everyone is supposed to be feeling towards the select trinity.

The "acclamations English" of which mademoiselle has spoken break forth at this juncture and Chandos has to await a cessation of the uproar.

Many things flash through his mind during the brief interval. He knows that he ought to be in the thick of the crowd, responding to what has been said; but the knowledge does not disturb him. He thinks of May Pole-Gell, and grinds his teeth savagely.

He rehearses the many attempts he has made during the last two months to ingratiate himself with his mother's maid, and he reminds himself how signally they have failed. That mademoiselle will assuredly leave my lady's employment within a day or two he knows from the many complaints to which he has listened of late, where the loss of her services has with bitter words been ascribed to him.

Of a surety they will part on the morrow, and that for ever unless he can devise means to clip the wings of this wild bird who will not be lured into a golden cage. The fumes of the wine he has drunk mount to his brain. He is intoxicated as much with angry mortification and with the sentiment to which he applies the hallowed name of "love," as with champagne. And this is the result.

"Lavinie," he whispers, tenderly, "my words conceal no insult. When I ask you to accept my protection I am asking you to become my wife."

(To be Continued.)



[A STRANGE LIKENESS.]

KATE'S LOVERS.

A NOVELETTE.

(COMPLETE IN THIS NUMBER.)

CHAPTER I.

A GREAT CHANGE.

SOMEWHERE in one of the midland shires there stands a little village, nestling in a valley between two lofty hills. The village is called Norbury, and at the time our story opens Mr. Hartly had been rector of the place for more than twenty years.

It was not a rich living—a hundred and fifty pounds a year all told—but then provisions were cheap in Norbury, and The Rectory was the prettiest place imaginable—a perfect bower, with roses and clematis climbing up the walls and peeping in at the open windows.

The rector had not a large family. Although he had tempted Fate (that is to say, matrimony) twice, he had but a single pledge of each union, both daughters, with only four years between them.

Very different were these two girls, but not more different than was the present Mrs. Hartly from her predecessor. The rector's first wife had been a gentle, blushing girl, who died before she had been married a year, or grown used to being addressed by her married name. His second was a busy, energetic, middle-aged woman, very fond of setting the world to rights, including her husband, and with only one soft corner in her heart, which was filled by her only child, and rather more than her proper prejudices, the strongest of which was against her step-daughter, whom she heartily disliked because she was keen-sighted enough to perceive that, little as he showed his partiality, Kate was dearer to her father than his younger child.

Kate Hartly was about eighteen when our story opens—a slight, graceful girl, with large, dreamy brown eyes, and long, dark lashes, a mouth almost wistful in its sadness, and a quiet, gentle face, which yet could light up with intelligence, or sparkle with fun, if life would only provide her any fun to sparkle at.

For fifteen long years Mrs. Hartly had been striving to keep Kate under and snub her into a proper state of submission, and at their end it said much for the girl's natural spirits that they were still unbroken, and though often sad and depressed, Kate Hartly had not lost her gift of merriment entirely.

It was a wild March day, the wind blew perfect clouds of dust along the village lane, and whistled round The Rectory, endeavouring to find its way into the cosy little dining-room, where Mrs. Hartly sat, trying very hard to induce her step-daughter to hear reason.

The matron had a frown on her face, her cheeks were red with excitement, and her cap was slightly aside through the force with which she shook her head at Kate's wilfulness. Opposite was that young lady herself, looking her prettiest in a shabby blue serge dress, her brown hair gathered in a loose knot at the back of her head, a burning flush on her face, and tears not very far off her soft, brown eyes.

"I can't help it," she said, wearily, putting up one hand to support her aching head, "I don't like Tom Brown, and I cannot marry him. It's no use talking to me, mamma, I have quite made up my mind."

"I call it flying in the face of Providence."

"I am very, very sorry," absently, "I can't help it."

"Not help it?" and Mrs. Hartly's cap fairly danced in her excitement. "Keep to the truth, if you please, miss. Not help it, indeed! The finest young farmer for miles round offers to marry you and let you lead a lady's life all your days, and you calmly refuse to marry him, and then say you can't help it."

Kate looked sorrowfully around the little room where she had spent so many years. It was

very shabby, and showed many signs of wear and tear. At Mr. Brown's farmhouse the furniture was all new, the mahogany shone like a mirror, the carpets were so thick and new you could hardly hear your footsteps upon them, but for all that Kate loved the dear old Rectory, and hated Ashton Farm. One was home, the other would be exile.

"I never thought Mr. Brown would want to marry me," said the girl, at last, her voice almost pitiful in its sadness.

"Then what on earth do you suppose he came here for night after night eating us out of house and home?"

"I thought he came to see papa."

"It's no use looking at me with that baby face, Kate. You're eighteen, turned, and you know as well as I do that Mr. Brown's never thought of a girl but you since you were in short frocks and pinnafores. I'm sure you ought to marry him, if it were only out of gratitude."

A vision rose up before Kate of her lonely, neglected childhood, when the only gleams of sunshine she had known had come to her through Tom and his mother.

These two were the greatest friends she had in the world; but the rector's daughter was a true woman. She knew quite well she did not love the master of Ashton Farm as she felt dimly it was in her nature to love someone, and she would not go to him with a lie on her lips and marry him just for the sake of the good things that marriage would bring to her.

"I do like Tom," she said, slowly. "I think I love him as much as if he were my brother, but I shall never marry him, mamma, and he quite understands it."

"You do not mean you have refused him?"

"I wrote last night. I thought he ought to know at once."

Mrs. Hartly looked as if she could have beaten Kate.

"Well, I daresay you think it very grand to have such fine sentimental feeling. I don't. I've worked hard all my life through marrying a man with a small income, and I know what

sentimental rubbish your ideas are. What do you suppose is to become of you when your father dies?"

"I never thought about it."

"I suppose you thought I should keep you. I have had enough of your airs and graces already; because your mother was a lady forsooth you think yourself above me whose father was in trade. I can tell you the grocer's daughter brought your father a nice little sum of money, while your mother had nothing but the clothes she wore when she ran away with him. I suppose you are looking out for a fine gentleman, and then you'll elope as she did."

"Oh don't," cried Kate, in a pitiful voice; "blame me as much as you like, but don't say anything against my mother. I can't bear it."

"Why, you can't remember her, child," said Mrs. Hartly, in a milder tone. "There, I daresay she didn't mean any harm, it was the way her lady mother brought her up. I only want you to see there may be worse things than marrying an honest man."

Kate looked up at her step-mother, her face full of a great resolve.

"I don't want to be a burden to you," she said, simply. "I know papa is not rich, and that you have Mabel to think of. I am quite willing to work if you would only not ask me to marry Mr. Brown, but let me go away and earn my own living."

"What could you do?" a little mollified.

Mabel was turned fourteen now, a fine girl of her age. It was Mrs. Hartly's ardent wish to get rid of Kate by matrimony or other means before her own child was of an age to be wedded and won. The mother would have denied that Kate was half so pretty as Mabel, but men were strange creatures, and they might be eccentric enough to prefer her delicate face to her sister's more buxom charms.

"I don't know," said Kate, awkwardly, "but I am sure I could teach little children, or I might be a companion to some lady. You know I can make hats and bonnets and turn dresses very nicely."

Mrs. Hartly shrugged her shoulders.

"Well, if you are so foolish as to prefer being a sort of upper servant to having a snug house of your own, a better one than I have ever had in my life, why I cannot say anything against it. It's only fair to us that you should do something for yourself and not stand in Mabel's light any longer."

"I suppose I had better advertise. I will ask paper about it to-night."

"You'd better not say anything to him till it's all settled. He's so set on you, very likely he'd have nothing to say to it."

But this Kate resolved to decide for herself. Little as she knew of the world and its social code she felt by instinct that her father had more refinement, belonged in fact to another order, than his wife. She was right. Charles Hartly was of gentle birth, and at one time his prospects looked very fair. He was tutor to an earl's only son and stood high in favour with his patron—in fact there was little doubt he would have been appointed to the family living had not he been rash enough, mad enough, wicked enough (these are the earl's own adjectives) to fall in love with his pupil's only sister.

What was worse, the Lady Katharine returned his affection, love was too strong for the poor young couple, and there was an elopement from The Castle. For a few brief months they enjoyed unutterable happiness, then the gentle wife died, leaving as her husband's consolation a helpless baby.

No offer of pardon or reconciliation had ever come to the rash pair. After his Katie's death the Reverend Charles almost ceased to wish for it. He had his darling's child. Her parents might strive to win her from him. On the whole his great wish was to avoid all intercourse with the earl and countess, and in this he succeeded. He buried himself at Norbury, and there more for Katie's sake than his own married this second wife, thinking she would be a mother to his child.

No mistake could have been more fatal. Mrs.

Hartly was jealous of her step-daughter and did her utmost to turn her husband's heart against her. In this she entirely failed. The rector could not do much to defend his darling from the petty trials to which she was subject, but he never let her doubt his love for her, and the one point on which he was firm was that she should have a good education. How he managed it what sacrifice he made, was never known, but Kate attended an excellent school two miles off and learned all a gentlewoman requires to know. She might be deficient in many fashionable arts, but she understood her own language thoroughly, spoke and read French with ease, and played like a true musician. Mr. Hartly was well pleased.

"They will never be ashamed of her if they meet her," he thought.

Kate went straight from that consultation with her step-mother to her father's study. What she said to him, how she persuaded him to part with her, we need not tell here, but the rector was not blind, he knew a little of all the girl had to contend with at home, and he saw she would be happier away.

"There is only one thing, Katie—I am a poor man, but I come of an old family; I cannot have our name dragged into notice."

"I could not bear a false one," said the girl, simply, much surprised.

"There is no need; you were christened Kate Fraser. While you are away from home it is my wish that you should be known only by your second name. You need not mention this to anyone. I have often talked of your future to Miss Clair, and she has always agreed that this would be best. We knew you would have to do something for yourself when I was gone—it is only anticipating it by a few years. But I am grieved, my child; you little know how bitterly I shall miss you."

The next day Mr. Hartly and his eldest daughter walked over to Miss Clair's. This lady was the principal of the school where Kate had been educated. Strange to say she had been governess to the first Mrs. Hartly, and she therefore knew from what stock the rector's daughter sprang. This had always been kept a secret from all, even from Kate herself and her step-mother. Although the latter knew that her predecessor had been higher in rank than she was, she never even guessed how much higher.

Miss Clair received her visitors very kindly. School was over, and a pleasant tea was soon spread in her own sitting-room. After it was finished Kate went to see her late companions, and her governess and her father could talk unchecked.

"It seems the best thing," said Miss Clair, slowly. "Kate will never be happy at home—forgive me for saying so—but there is too great a difference between her and Mrs. Hartly."

"Yes," with painful slowness; "that was a great mistake."

He meant his second marriage.

"After all she will see the world," resumed Miss Clair, thoughtfully. "If she marries she ought to have a husband in her own station. Why do you not write to the earl?"

"I do not even know that he is alive."

"Yes. He is not such a very old man either—not more than sixty-five."

"I should not like to confess I had made my home too unhappy for my child to stay there—besides, he has other claims."

"What other claims?" abruptly.

"There was my pupil, Viscount Neville—I do not know much of fashionable life, but I read of his marriage—no doubt he has many children; they would be nearer to their grandfather than my little Kate."

Miss Clair looked at him in amazement. Was this simple clergyman really so unworldly as not to take an interest in his noble kindred? Did he really not know that the viscount was dead, and one ailing, sickly child alone stood between Kate and heiress-ship?

Miss Clair had been longer with the Manchester family than Mr. Hartly. She knew, though he did not, that the title and estate were entailed, but not to the exclusion of females, and that if the little life so many physicians

shook their heads over was quenched, Kate Fraser Hartly would be one day in her own right Countess of Manchester.

"Should she tell him?" Miss Clair thought, long and earnestly; it seemed kindest not. Mr. Hartly was troubled and anxious enough already at the idea of parting from his child; better not distress him further. So she said nothing of the wonderful chance that might come to pass, but merely promised to advertise at once for a situation suitable for her favourite pupil.

"You will leave it to me," she said, with a smile; "such things are more in a woman's line, and I fancy it will be easier to me than to Mrs. Hartly. When I have found anything desirable send Kate over to me and I will see she has everything needful for her position. Don't talk of thanks," as the poor rector strove in vain to express his gratitude; "you and I are old friends, and, besides, for her mother's sake I must always feel an interest in Kate."

She did not say for her father's too, though that would have been strictly true. In the old days at Manchester Castle Alice Clair had lost her heart once for all. She had not grudged Charles Hartly to the Lady Katharine Neville, she had grudged him bitterly to his second wife, but all the same for the sake of that past time she was ready to do all she could to lighten the burden that pressed so heavily upon him, and she loved Kate dearly.

"Well, I never!" said Mrs. Hartly, when her husband and Kate returned. "I should have thought I was the fit person to look out for something for the girl. I have been a mother to her, and know more of what she can do than a strict school dame like Miss Clair."

"Miss Clair knows more people than we do, my dear. She has promised to take all the trouble of it. It would have been a great bother to you, especially as Mab's Easter holidays begin so soon."

"I hope Mab will grow up more sensible than her sister," said the mother, shortly. "I shall be better pleased if she knows which side her bread's buttered, than to play the piano and a lot of useless things like Kate."

Kate looked ready to cry, but a look from her father comforted her, and not daring to trust herself in a tête-à-tête with Mrs. Hartly she made the excuse of being tired, and going upstairs to her own room soon forgot alike her troubles and the coming change in sleep.

Miss Clair was strangely bewildered when she read her letters the morning after Mr. Hartly's visit. For years she had held little communication with the noble family of Manchester; she had not displeased them, the name of the countess headed the list of referees in her prospectus, and now and again at Christmas time substantial tokens of good-will would come to the schoolmistress, but for all that of direct intercourse there had been but little, chiefly because Alice Clair was inseparably linked in the mind of the countess with the beautiful girl whose friend and companion she had been, therefore you will understand the governess's surprise at unfolding a closely written letter in Lady Manchester's well-remembered hand.

At any time it would have astonished her, but coming so to say, immediately after the rector's visit, Miss Clair was simply bewildered.

Lady Manchester wrote kindly, almost affectionately. She took it for granted her correspondent had heard of their sad loss. Their little grandson and his mother had both died of a malignant fever, caught whilst away from Manchester on a visit.

"We seem alone in the world," continued the bereaved lady. "If my poor Katharine had lived our hearts would naturally have turned to her in our sorrow, but my son ascertained some time before his death that she only survived her rash marriage a few months, so that we are quite alone. Our nearest relatives are my husband's nephew and niece; we have invited them both to make their home at Manchester, and our hope is that Wilfred will become attached to his cousin and marry her. She is a charming girl of twenty, but I have suffered too much to make me a lively companion for young people, and

poor Joan seems both dull and depressed. I therefore wish to find a young lady to reside with us and accompany her in her walks, etc. It struck me that situated as you are you are just the person to recommend me someone. I need hardly urge upon you that she must be a lady, if possible young and cheerful, but I should relate to anyone who had brothers or other relations in London."

"She is afraid of Miss Joan," thought the reader.

There was a strong conflict going on in Alice Clair's mind. Here was a home going begging, there was Kate Hartly seeking a home; they seemed made for each other. The one drawback was that Kate had a right to that home on other terms—that she and neither Wilfred nor Joan was in very truth heiress of Manchester.

The kind-hearted woman yielded at last to her love for Kate. She sat down and wrote a long letter to Lady Manchester, recommending Miss Fraser in the highest terms. Then she sent a note to the rector begging that Kate should come to her at once, and requesting him to call.

She never told him that Kate had become her grandfather's heiress, she induced him to let his daughter accept Lady Manchester's engagement by one powerful argument.

"Do you not think our dear Katharine would like to see her child in her own old home—the friend and companion of her own relations?"

And Mr. Hartly yielded implicitly. After that one mention of his wife he became pliable as wax in Miss Clair's hands. His only fear was that the countess would decline to receive Kate on account of her youth and total inexperience.

The countess, however, did nothing of the sort. She wrote promptly to say that she was satisfied, the salary she offered was a hundred a year; she would expect Miss Fraser at Manchester in a fortnight. Perhaps she would write and say by which train she would travel.

That was a busy fortnight. Miss Clair stole many an hour from her school to go shopping on Kate's behalf. She bought the girl more clothes than she had ever before possessed, and when our heroine begged of her not to spend so much upon her she answered, with a smile:

"My dear, you will need them all. Remember, I lived at Manchester Castle myself once. Life there is very different from life at Norbury."

"But I do not like you to spend so much on me. I know you love me without that," kissing her very fondly.

"Well, if you are so desperately proud, Katie, you shall pay me back some day. I have only spent twenty-five pounds, it is not so much."

"I shall send you my first quarter's salary."

"And leave yourself penniless, foolish child. I hope you will do nothing of the sort. You shall pay me something every quarter, there, will that content you?"

Afterwards, when she knew the secret now so carefully kept from her, Kate understood Miss Clair's advice; even now she valued it. Her governess gave her many little hints as to her conduct at The Castle, specially charging her to say as little as possible about herself and her own concerns.

"Great people expect us to think of nothing but their affairs when we live with them, Katie, and do not mention your step-mother; your very voice changes when you speak of her, child."

"I cannot help not loving her."

"No, I understand that, but Lady Manchester would not. Take my advice, Katie, and keep your own counsel on home matters."

The news that Miss Hartly had left home and gone to Miss Clair's spread like wildfire through Norbury, and Mr. Brown one market day calmly drove over to the white house where so many of the Norbury upper ten thousand had been educated and asked to see her. Kate came to him at once.

"My dear," said the big fellow, simply, "I'm afraid things have not gone well at home, and I hope I've had no share in it. It's not your fault

you could not love me, though Heaven knows it's been a hard blow to me."

Kate put one hand gently on his shoulder.

"I think I must be very hard hearted, Tom, not to feel as you do. I like you better than anyone I know, but I shall never like you like that, dear, never, and you mustn't think it's anyone's fault I'm going, for I never was quite happy at home; you know mother never loved me as she did Mabel. And so I'm going to London, Tom, to seek my fortune."

And his strong voice shook as he replied:
"And I hope it'll be a rare good one, dear."

CHAPTER II.

AT MANCHESTER.

It was April, a pleasant, spring-like day, you could hardly have expected such not three weeks after the blustering March afternoon when I first presented Kate Hartly to your notice.

In the pretty boudoir at Manchester Castle, which had been given up to Joan Neville, that young lady sat alone, looking very bored and dispirited. She was a pretty brunette, as different from her cousin Kate Hartly as could well be imagined.

Joan was dark and stately; she had flashing black eyes, and a bright carnation colour. She was the daughter of Lord Manchester's youngest brother and an orphan.

The six months that had gone by since she had completed her education had been spent with her uncle and aunt, and Joan knew perfectly well that their hope and expectation were that she should marry their nephew, her first cousin, the Honourable Wilfred Neville, heir presumptive to the earldom of Manchester and its rich revenues.

Joan was not at all in love with her destiny. She liked Wilfred very much, but there was nothing love-like in her feelings towards him. Life at Manchester Castle was very dull; the little heir and his mother had been dead a year, and the mourning for them was well-nigh over, but it seemed to Miss Neville that her uncle and aunt were no wit nearer getting over their grief.

Society was very dull and pompous at Manchester; The Castle was the chief house of the neighbourhood, and people paid great court to the countess; they even paid court in a way to Joan as a sort of future countess, but she laughed at their efforts, and took a wicked delight in assuring them she might never reign at Manchester after all; there was no engagement between her cousin and herself.

Joan threw herself back in a lounging chair by the fire and tried to go to sleep; it was very dull trying to go to sleep at three o'clock, but really there was nothing else to do. She was not displeased to hear a rapid step in the corridor outside, then the refrain of a popular song, and lastly a tap at her own door and the appearance of a head as dark and even more stately than her own, to be followed by the whole figure of the head's owner, the Honourable Wilfred Neville.

"All alone, Joan. I thought Aunt Nella's latest idea for securing your happiness and improvement—" he imitated Lady Manchester's exact tone—"would have arrived before now."

"She is expected at five, Wilfred. I am sure I shall hate her."

Mr. Neville smiled. He was a very handsome man, and very like Joan—in fact, so like her that the idea of their becoming husband and wife seemed strange—they looked like brother and sister.

Wilfred was thirty, turned, a barrister of good abilities, and some talents. People said his prosperity was certain, even if he had only his profession to depend upon, but, as we know, he anticipated a far more brilliant future as Earl of Manchester.

Take him altogether his face was very pleasing, in spite of a certain haughtiness of manner, which even his smile could not entirely hide. People said that his rich voice had made woeful

havoc in women's hearts, and that no girl (even without the prospective coronet) would have refused to be his wife. He had never asked any, however. He had flirted as young men often do, but no real love had ever troubled him.

He looked at his cousin with a careless smile. He was very fond of her as a pretty, wilful child, but he did not care for her in any other light. The family had settled that he should marry her, and being of an easy disposition he had not troubled himself to resist their verdict. Perhaps he hoped that Joan might take that office off his shoulders.

"And why do you think you shall hate her? I should have imagined you would have welcomed any companion in such a dull place as Manchester."

"Just fancy what she will be like, Wilfred. She is the great friend of some antiquated creature who was governess or companion or something of the sort to Lady Katharine Neville who died ever so long ago."

"Lady Katharine wasn't old or antiquated."

"Do you remember her?"

"Perfectly."

"I am always forgetting what a venerable individual you are," pouting.

He laughed.

"I was a mere child, nine or ten at the most, but I remember Lady Katharine perfectly, and Miss Clair too. I don't think you need be frightened if it is her friend who is coming, Joan."

"I wanted someone young."

"How old is she?"

"Aunty doesn't know; she forgot to ask."

"Satisfactory."

"She seems to have left everything to Miss Clair; all she can tell me is that Miss Fraser must be very nice because Miss Clair thinks so very highly of her."

"Well, I will own the prospect is not alluring. Shall I stay here, Joan, and help you through the first interview with the antiquated piece of respectability?"

"I wish you would, Will."

"Joan," he said, presently, when he had sat down opposite her and had a full view of her face, "don't you think you lead a very lazy life?"

"It is so dull here, Will."

"I have been thinking, dear, that this life cannot be good for you. You are not bit like the merry Joan who came home from school, you want a little pleasure to brighten up your life. Shall I speak to Lady Manchester and ask her to let you be presented this season?"

Joan shook her head.

"I know she won't," positively; "she thinks now I have a companion I ought to want nothing else."

She might have added:

"Aunt has made up her mind I am not to go anywhere or see anybody until I am properly engaged to you."

But Joan, high-spirited and wild though she was, was singularly reserved on some matters. She and Wilfred never touched upon their future.

A slight sound of wheels. Mr. Neville looked carelessly from the window.

"Miss Clair's protégée seems to be arriving, Joan. Shall we go and welcome her?"

"We shall see her soon enough."

"Joan, don't be selfish. Remember whoever she is has left her own home to come to you. She may be dreading you as much as you do her."

Joan privately doubted this, but she made no opposition, and accompanied her cousin to the drawing-room. The countess looked up delighted when they entered together.

"You are just in time to help me receive Miss Fraser."

Another minute, and the butler, opening the door, made the expected announcement. Then there entered a girl far younger and more childish-looking than Joan herself, a creature with sweet, frightened, brown eyes, a wild rose bloom, and a speaking sadness about her well-shaped mouth.

She wore a soft grey dress, a spring mantle,

and plain straw hat, but Wilfred, who knew every sign of blue blood, felt certain that the stranger was as nobly born as himself or Joan. To his surprise Lady Manhester seemed strangely agitated. At the first sight of Miss Fraser she turned deadly pale, and it was some seconds before she could regain her composure.

Miss Fraser advanced timidly, and the countess, rising, took her hand.

"You must forgive my agitation, my dear; you reminded me of someone I loved very dearly. This is my niece, Joan. I trust you and Miss Fraser will be good friends."

"I am sure of it," cried Joan, impulsively.

Then the introduction to Wilfred was effected, and, to complete her niece's astonishment, Lady Manhester herself proposed to show the young companion to her rooms.

"Will wonders ever cease?" cried Joan, when they were out of earshot. "What on earth can be Miss Fraser's spell to have conquered aunty's heart so completely? I never knew her take even the most honoured guest upstairs herself."

Wilfred laughed.

"You too have changed your opinion."

"Of course. I am sure she will be nice, and she doesn't look a day more than seventeen. Will, don't you think she's charming?"

"Now would you like me to think it?" he asked her, laughing.

Joan blushed crimson. It was the first time he had alluded directly or indirectly to what were well known to be their desired relations to each other.

"If you thought so I should like you to say it," answered Joan, at last, looking at her lover with a strange expression in her splendid eyes. "I like truth better than anything, I think, Will."

"And I am sure you do, dear," taking her hand and pressing it to his lips. "You are a Neville, and the watchword of our race is 'Truth'."

"But do you like Miss Fraser?"

"My dear child, how could I like anyone on less than five minutes' acquaintance? I think she has a sweet face, and I hope you will be good friends."

"Whom do you think she reminds, aunty of? The viscountess was tall and dark."

"I think it must be of her daughter. Miss Fraser is strangely like what I remember of my cousin Katharine."

"Why is she never mentioned, Will? Even if she is dead they might speak of her sometimes, and she is not buried here."

"You must never speak of her to the earl or my aunt. Never; do you hear, Joan? She ran away because she loved a man they would not let her marry."

"Was he a nice man?"

"A capital fellow. No one had a bad word for him until he was mad enough to fancy Lady Katharine, and as they were thrown constantly together, that was hardly his fault. They were married, and lived somewhere in the back slums of London. She died soon after, I believe."

"And didn't they forgive her when she was dying?" asked Joan, her eyes full of tears, for she had a tender heart.

"Her husband was too proud to write. He was a good fellow, and no one could accuse him of seeking Katharine for what she had, since it ruined his whole prospects."

"The world well lost for love," whispered Joan, half to herself. "I like that."

"Don't grow too romantic, dear," said Wilfred, smiling. "People say it runs in the Neville blood, but there are exceptions. The last viscount married an heiress."

They met Miss Fraser at dinner, and even Joan confessed that Miss Clair's protégée seemed an acquisition. Kate's shyness was almost gone, and she answered Miss Neville's questions as frankly as they were put. The earl and countess smiled across the table to each other as though to congratulate themselves on the success of their experiment.

Perhaps the only person who felt dissatisfied was Wilfred Neville. He thought the new companion had simply the sweetest face he had

ever seen. Her manners were full of simple grace, and yet, for all that, he was not pleased to see her installed at Manhester Castle as his cousin Joan's companion.

There might be danger for him in those soft, brown eyes, in that sweet, musical tone—not that he admitted as much even to himself. He thought his anxiety was only for Joan's sake. This Miss Fraser was too young to have any influence over her. A clever woman of the world would have had more control over his pretty, wilful cousin.

A week passed on. Kate had settled down into her place at Manhester. If we except Mr. Neville she was a favourite with everyone there. They wondered how they had ever managed to exist without her, so useful and necessary did she seem.

Joan learned to love The Castle now she had a companion in her walks and drives. The two girls were very happy and cosy together. They practised duets and made drawings in company, and Joan confided to Miss Fraser that her darling wish was to write a novel. But in spite of Joan's claims on her Kate found time to be of more use to Lady Manhester than her niece had ever been. She copied sermons, wound wool, and wrote notes for the old lady with untiring zeal. She was always ready to read the newspapers to the earl, or walk with him to inspect the home farm—in reality Kate had no interested motive. She pitied the lonely, childless couple, and loved to serve them, and much as she liked Joan she could not think her blameless in accepting so much kindness from her uncle and aunt and never striving to do anything for them in return.

Miss Neville never in the least resented that Kate should be of more use to the earl and countess than herself. She thought it very sweet and amiable of her companion, and told her so.

"They worry me dreadfully. I love them dearly, but I don't think I can get on with old people like you do, Miss Fraser."

"You will not have to do with old people long," said Kate, with a smile. "Lady Manhester told me yesterday that you would soon be married."

This was when June had come and gone, and Joan's twenty-first birthday was a thing of the past. They were in July, and Mr. Neville was expected on the first of August to spend the whole of the long vacation.

"Good gracious! I hope not," cried Joan, more energetically than elegantly. "I assure you, Miss Fraser, I am not in the least hurry."

Kate looked surprised, and the young lady continued:

"I'm very fond of Wilfred in my way, but I don't care in the least to marry him, and I don't believe he cares to marry me."

"Then why are you engaged?" then blushing hotly at her own curiosity. "Pray forgive me, Miss Neville. I ought not to have been so rude."

"It is not at all rude, dear. I am engaged to Wilfred—if we are engaged—because we two are the last of the Nevilles, and uncle and aunt think we ought to marry."

A week later and Wilfred Neville arrived, bringing a couple of legal friends with him. The barrister was not pleased at the position he found Miss Fraser filling in his hosts' affections, and when he spoke to Joan alone he told her his opinion pretty freely.

"I wish Miss Fraser had never come here."

"When she is so good to me? I call it very unkind of you, Will."

"My dear, she is not kind to you. She has contrived somehow or other to fill the place that should be yours. Can't you see you are nothing to the earl and countess to what she is?"

"I can't help it if they do like her best. She is a great deal better than I am."

"I believe she is an artful impostor."

"Wilfred!"

"Look here, Joan. She has been at Manhester four months. She has wound herself into your confidence, and I don't suppose you have a single secret from her."

"I don't think I have. Well?"

"My dear, confidences to be worth having

should be mutual. What do you know of Miss Fraser?"

The question came on Joan with a sudden shock. Never before had it occurred to her that Miss Fraser was reserved to a degree about herself. Joan knew absolutely no more about her than when she had sat in that boudoir with Wilfred expecting her companion's arrival.

"She is a friend of Miss Clair."

"We knew that before. Well?"

"She was a day pupil at her school."

"Then she must live within a three miles' radius. Has she a mother, a father, brothers or sisters?"

"I don't know."

"And this is the person you have let become all in all to your uncle and aunt? No friend worthy of the name could accept your confidences for more than four months and tell you nothing of her own history in return."

"But I never asked her, Wilfred, never once."

"Joan, I do believe you are as simple as a child of eight years old."

He set to work, however, on his own account. Mr. Neville had friends everywhere, and he chanced to have some not very far from Norbury. To them he wrote saying that he was much interested in a young lady of the name of Fraser, and wished to discover her address for professional reasons. She must reside somewhere in the neighbourhood as she had attended Miss Clair's academy as a day pupil.

The answer was prompt. His friend knew Miss Clair well. His sisters were boarders at her school—had been so for five years—and they (now at home for their holidays) were positive that no pupil of the name of Fraser had ever been at that school in their time or before. They must have known, as the name of each young lady was emblazoned on a roll at her departure.

Wilfred was hardly surprised when he read this letter. He always felt there was something strange about his cousin's companion. Kate Fraser had stirred his heart as no other woman ever had. For her he felt he could give up friends, wealth, and home, but if she was an imposter, a deceiver, he would have no mercy on her. He would unmask her as relentlessly as though she had been a street beggar.

With a strange mixture of hope and fear, anger and pity, struggling in his heart, and his friend's letter in his pocket, he begged Kate to give him her assistance in the library, where he was making a list of books for his uncle.

Suspecting nothing, our heroine followed him into the spacious room. To her surprise he locked the door, and then placed her a chair by the long oaken table in perfect silence.

CHAPTER III.

WILFRED'S LOVE.

THERE was a strange silence between the two. For Kate Wilfred Neville had ever held a strange fascination. There was a music in his voice, a charm in his smile, she felt without being able to explain; and to him she was simply the most beautiful girl he had ever known, but if she was a deceiver, if she had wormed herself into Joan's confidence unworthily, he would not spare her.

"Miss Fraser," he asked, suddenly, "do you think it an honourable thing to enter a nobleman's family under an assumed name?"

Kate burst into tears. It hurt Wilfred strangely to see the pearly drops flow between the slender fingers she put up to hide her face. He relented at the sight of her grief; her evident distress unnerved him.

"Why did you do it?" he asked, kindly. "I am sure you are of gentle birth. Why did you come here in a name that was not your own, and how came Miss Clair to assist you in your scheme?"

"How did you find it out?" she asked, in a pitiful whisper. "They will be so angry with me. My father made me promise never to tell

anyone, and Miss Clair herself told me to be careful."

Wilfred looked into her sweet face. He felt certain there could be no wrong in one so pure and innocent-looking. Very tenderly, more tenderly than he would have spoken even to Joan, he said :

"I do not know your real name. I only know that Miss Clair never had a pupil of the name of Fraser."

Kate looked relieved.

"I am so glad," she breathed. "Papa could not bear the idea of my using our name. We are very poor, Mr. Neville, but my father has his pride, and I am his eldest child. He could not bear that I should have to earn my own living."

A sudden light dawned on Wilfred.

"Do you mean that you came to us as Miss Fraser because your family thought it beneath their dignity for a companion to bear their name?"

"Yes," replied Kate, sadly. "Was it very wrong, Mr. Neville? I did not like to do it, but papa was so urgent, and Miss Clair too thought it right. I never meant to deceive Lord and Lady Manchester, indeed, I did not."

"I am sure of it," said Wilfred, kindly. "Is this why you have been so secret with Joan? She was telling me to-day that she knew no more of you than when you came here first."

"Miss Clair said great people would not care to hear about me."

"Well, I am not a great person, and I should care very much. Will you trust me, Miss Fraser? Indeed, I will respect your confidence."

"Papa did not want me to leave home," began Kate, timidly, "but we are very poor, though he is rector of Norbury, and my step-mother was tired of me. She wanted me to do something that I would not"—here poor Kate blushed hotly, and Wilfred quite understood what the "something" had been—"and she was very angry, so I thought I had better come away."

"Poor little girl"—he took her hand in his—"it must have been hard for you."

"I don't know," a little remorsefully. "I have been so happy here."

"So happy? Why, Joan never ceased to complain of the dulness of Manchester."

"It is different for Miss Neville. She has a right to expect gaiety and amusement. It has been so quiet and peaceful here. The earl and countess are so good to me."

"I wonder why it is that in four months' time you have become almost indispensable to them, and Joan is still no more to them than a visitor?"

"I cannot tell you how it is. I sometimes feel," a dreamy, far-off look in her sweet eyes, "that I must have known Lord and Lady Manchester a long time ago. They never seem like strangers to me."

Wilfred rose to go. Kate turned to him with an imploring glance.

"Shall you tell them? Will you make them send me away?"

"No," replied the young man, quietly. "I have wronged you deeply, Miss Fraser. You have merely obeyed others who ought to have known better. I wish the deceit had not been practised, but it harms nobody."

"You will not tell anyone?"

"I will not tell anybody, not even Joan."

"Mr. Neville," shyly.

"Miss Fraser."

"Lady Manchester has told me how it is to be. Will you let me congratulate you? Indeed, indeed, I hope you and Miss Neville will be very happy."

"I shall never be happy if I marry Joan," cried Wilfred, throwing all prudence to the winds. "She is a dear girl, but I shall never think of her otherwise than as a sister. My heart is all another's."

No suspicion of his meaning came to Kate. Timidly, she said :

"They will be so disappointed."

"Who?"

"Your uncle and aunt."

"One does not marry to please one's relations.

You did not marry the man your step-mother selected for you."

She blushed hotly.

"Do you never mean to marry?" asked Wilfred, in a curious voice. "Wouldn't you like a home of your own?"

"I would never marry for a home," returned the girl, proudly. "I can imagine nothing in this world so miserable as a loveless marriage."

"That is just my opinion. I shall never marry anyone unless the girl I love accepts me. Don't you think she will be very hard-hearted to refuse me?"

"Very."

"Then, Kate, you will make me happy. Don't tremble so, my darling. I loved you the moment I saw you. Heaven knows I have struggled hard enough against the love, but it was too strong for me. Will you be my wife? I promise you I will do what heart and life can to make you happy."

Only two words came from Kate's white lips.

"Miss Neville."

"Joan has never loved me. She will be glad to be free. Kate, even if you refuse me I shall never marry her. My own love, do not send me away."

"But only this morning you thought me an impostor."

"And now I know you for a lonely, motherless child. Kate, my uncle and aunt love you already. You need not fear your welcome here."

He opened his arms and gathered her to his heart, and Kate never struggled in his embrace; it was all too sweet to find herself so loved and cared for. For some minutes there was perfect silence, then Wilfred asked, tenderly :

"And may I not know your darling's name? I shall go to Norbury to-day, Kate, to ask your father for his treasure."

"I was christened Kate Fraser; my other name is Hartly."

Wilfred started.

"Is your father's name Charles? Did your mother die before you could remember?"

"Yes," wonderfully.

"My darling! Do you know who you are? No wonder your heart warmed to my uncle and aunt. You are the child of their only daughter."

"Is it possible?"

"Indeed it is. You will be taking away your promise now. Do you know that you will be Countess of Manchester, and I shall be nothing?"

"I shall never take away my promise if you care to keep it."

Nor did she. Before the year was ended the rector of Norbury had read the solemn marriage service which changed his daughter into the Honorable Mrs. Neville. Joan was married the same day to one of the legal friends we spoke of. She lives in London, but Wilfred and his wife make their home at Manchester with the earl and countess. Very, very happy is their married life, and never once has the clever barrister regretted becoming one of Kate's lovers.

BEATRICE PALLAVICINI.

Over head and heels—yes, from the extreme ends of his curling hair to the tips of his well-shaped feet—was the Hon. Harold Lenox in love with beautiful Beatrice Pallavicini, a hundred and fifty years ago in Rome.

This conduct on the part of a foreigner, even though good-looking and rich, the father of the lady naturally regarded as unpardonable presumption, for Beatrice was no maid of low degree, but a princess. In fact she was the only daughter of a family as proud as it was poor, and the belle, par excellence, of the highest pinnacle of Roman society.

Above all she was the affianced bride of the wealthy and highly-respected Marchese de

Cataldi, who certainly might be said to have some claim upon the gratitude and esteem of the daughter, as he had been the admirer of her mother before Beatrice was born.

If the worthy marquis was a little inclined to prosiness, and not everything that was pleasant to the eye, owing to an unfortunate squint, a rather too generous supply of flesh and a stiffness of the right knee, which interfered somewhat with the grace of his movements, surely the estimable qualities of his mind, his blue blood, and his long rent-roll might well counterbalance such trifling defects.

But in spite of everything the most astounding part of this "over true tale" is that the princess so far forgot herself as to prefer one of the Hon. Harold's yellow curls to all the marquis's ancestors and himself into the bargain, and to place the love-light in his bonnie blue eyes before all the glories, past and present, of the magnificent Palazzo Cataldi, of which she was destined in a few weeks to become the envied mistress.

The acquaintance began at the reception of a cardinal, had quickly ripened into love, with no other fuel to the flame than a ball now and then, chance meetings in picture galleries, stolen but most fervent glances in church, a few words perhaps, or even a secret pressure of hands in a crowd, and one never-to-be-forgotten evening, when the princess had met our hero in a garden pavilion behind the Palazzo Pallavicini, that unworthy young man having scaled the wall, surmounted with iron spikes, shutting in the palace grounds, to the no small detriment of his nether garments and perhaps to the limbs they enclosed, for love in the good old days was a hotter, more reckless sort of passion than in these times of prudent parents and far-seeing children, and to the Hon. Harold what were the prickings of the sharpest spikes to the pangs of separation from the mistress of his affections?

But then as now the course of true love was made rather a turbulent stream.

Spies were about; it had been whispered to the horrified marquis that his promised bride had sworn to die rather than become the wife of any other than this obscure, yellow-haired Englishman; and above all, to make assurance double sure, an inconvenient and most disagreeably watchful duenna, who lived as chaperone to the motherless princess, had of all evenings chosen the one above mentioned for a stroll in the garden.

"Good night, carissima mia!" Harold had said a dozen times at least, emphasising each farewell with a kiss. "Good night—and a fig for the gouty old marquis, who never shall call my bonnie bride his wife as long as I live to defend her!"

And Beatrice with swift feet turned to fly to the palace after seeing her lover safely over the wall, and was confronted by the angular figure of the scandalised duenna.

From that time the princess was kept a prisoner to the house and grounds, and watched as only an Italian maiden in the olden time could be watched, by the vigilant and faithful duenna, who did not quit her charge by day or by night.

This state of things was to continue until the princess left her father's house as the Marchesa de Cataldi; so that, verily, our lovers seemed to be in a sorry plight.

Harold with only a few additional scratches dropped safely into the street (ignorant, of course, of the disagreeable contrempts taking place the other side of the wall), almost on to the shoulders of a sentry pacing up and down before the palace; but the man was most accommodatingly oblivious and saw nothing.

He was in fact a sort of acquaintance of Harold's, being the son of an old servant of the Lenox family, who had married an Italian while accompanying Harold's grandmother on a tour through Italy many years before.

It certainly was very far from the intentions of the haughty Prince de Pallavicini to add fuel to the flame already burning with such vigour in the undaunted young Englishman's breast, by the well-nigh insurmountable obstacles he

placed in the way of true love; but when the Hon. Harold had for two weeks roamed disconsolately about from reception to ball, and from concert to theatre, without meeting the princess, and had finally, through the reprehensible means of bribery and corruption, heard from one of the Pallavicini housemaids the unlucky consequences of his last interview with his lady-love, he beat his breast, and would have torn his hair if he had not been proud of that adornment, as he swore the time for action had come—that a decisive blow must be struck.

All that day he shut himself into his rooms, ignoring visitors, his tailor, a garden party, everything but his dinner, while he formed wild and impracticable schemes for rescuing his lady fair from durance vile; but not until evening did any idea strike him, with such force as to send him flying downstairs, up the crowded street, upsetting two children and the cart of a wrathful applewoman on his way to the quarters of his devoted admirer, Francesco Valsachi, the soldier already mentioned, whom luckily he found at home.

What thereupon took place the remainder of this story will make clear.

Two days later, Harold, while drinking café noir in the French restaurant, had a rather disreputable scrap of paper thrust into his hand, on which was scrawled, "My watch is at the P. P. the rest of this week, from 2 to 9 P.M.; the first half of next week, from 10 to 2 P.M.—F.V."

And surely no scented, tinted love missive from the fairest lady in the land could have given more satisfaction to its recipient than did this curt, untidy-looking communication.

Up and down the terrace before the Palazzo Pallavicini paced the Princess Beatrice and her lynx-eyed duenna, on the dreary afternoon constitutional, which since the disastrous discovery two weeks before had never been allowed to stretch beyond the palace grounds.

The luxuriant southern beauty of the princess was perhaps in no wise impaired by the additional pallor which for days had been visible on her face; and there was a feverish, excited gleam in her velvety, dark eyes, which showed a spirit very much at variance with her quiet surroundings, as she gazed restlessly at the well-known, and now so monotonous scene, where never a sign of life was visible, save the tall sentry at the gate, who for several days seemed to have devoted his attention exclusively to the large entrance—the only opening of any size in the wall which enclosed the grounds.

The princess was thinking vaguely with a forlorn sort of gratitude to the man, for even that semblance of human companionship.

"I declare it is nearly six o'clock and the dress your highness is to wear at the prince's dinner party this evening has not yet arrived! Perhaps your highness would not object to walking towards the gate for a moment, as if no one is yet in sight I must send another messenger," exclaimed the duenna suddenly, after consulting her watch, and the princess mechanically followed her to where the sentry, motionless as a statue, was guarding the entrance.

Up and down the quiet and empty street the duenna gazed in dignified displeasure, listening for the footsteps that came not, while the princess, waiting listlessly inside, was watching curiously the sentry who behind the elder lady's back was anxiously trying to call the attention of someone—surely there was no one in sight but herself—to a slip of white paper he held in his hand.

Suddenly, after a hasty glance in every direction, he stooped, wrapped the paper around a pebble, and the next instant it fell in a bed of geraniums beside the princess, just as the irate duenna turned to rejoin her charge.

The princess's first emotion was amazement and indignation at this apparent impertinence, but a crest emblazoned on the paper caught her eye, and quietly while listening to her unsuspecting guardian's animadversions upon the offending dressmaker, she stooped to gather a pink geranium—and something else.

But now we will return to Harold and the plans

he was base enough to concoct, having for an object the total discomfiture of the most noble prince and marquis and the furtherance of his own selfish designs.

This is the carnival week in Rome, when the mirth is at its height, and the inhabitants, rich and poor, gentle and simple alike, are for a few short days meeting on a common ground in the mad revel of buffoonery and burlesque, but our hero has turned his back upon the merriment and excitement surging through the streets to again hold counsel with his faithfully, Francesco.

"Francesco, my boy," he was saying, after the man had with much persuasion been induced to seat himself in Harold's presence, "you have often confessed to a sort of hankering for a sight of polite society as you call it. How would you like going to the masquerade ball, Monday evening, at the Palazzo Ponti, in my place?"

"Surely, milord is joking!" began Francesco, aghast, but was interrupted.

"Francesco, you mean well, I know, but how often must I tell you that the title you insist upon giving me is only an unkind reminder of what nature has denied me? Now listen."

Then followed an audacious proposition which caused the Italian to recoil in dismay, exclaiming:

"Does milord remember that such a thing would probably cost me my position, without which I am a beggar?"

"Of course it would," responded the tempter, cheerfully. "Francesco, my boy, old England is the finest country the sun shines on, and the desire you have so often expressed to go there does you credit. How would you like the position of lodge-tender at a fine old place in Devonshire, with good wages, little work, and one of the prettiest little lodges in England for a home for so long a time as you choose to occupy it?"

"Is milord really serious?" cried the man, with a face fairly shining with delight, for the human heart is but weak at the best, and the thought of this brilliant prospect compared with the miserable pay and wearisome life of privation which he now lived silenced away scruples in Francesco's mind; and which of us can say that he would have chosen otherwise? Suddenly a mixture of anxiety and sheepishness clouded his face, as he stammered, "But there is a—that is—I—"

"Well, man, out with it! Are you going to object to the climate or the journey? What is wrong?"

"I—I—wouldn't exactly like to go alone, milord, for there is a—a young person who is—attached to me—"

"All right, Francesco," laughed Harold, heartily. "I am the last man in the world to interfere with an attachment just now; so bring along the young person by all means. The lodge is quite large enough for two."

It is the night of the grand masquerade ball at the Palazzo Ponti, and all the élite of Roman society are present, bidding farewell to pleasure for awhile as it were, for this is the last private ball of the season, and in two days these smiling patrician brows will be strewn with penitential Lenten ashes.

Among the fantastic crowd paying court to Prince Carnival, one of the most conspicuously elegant costumes is worn by a gentleman dressed as Sir Walter Raleigh, who, either for love of fresh air or because his handsome face is so much worthier of being seen than the black silk covering intended to hide it, seems to care very little for preserving his incognito, and his mask is as often resting on the yellow curls on the top of his head as on the face beneath.

For some time he thus stands unmoved, joking with a pair of Tyrolean peasant girls near a group of noblemen, from which the dark faces of the Prince Pallavicini and the Marchese de Cataudi scowl angrily at him. Then Sir Walter Raleigh, or Harold Lenox, strolls into the next room, and for half an hour disappears.

Leaving the ball-room he throws over his shoulders one of a pile of dominoes lying in an ante-room, walks quietly down the broad staircase into the street, where he finds a cab stand-

ing and is driven immediately to a small restaurant close to the Palazzo Pallavicini, where a private room is placed at his disposal for the evening.

Here he is joined almost immediately by Francesco Valsachi, eager and elated, yet with somewhat pale and nervous at the importance of the work to be done that night.

"Francesco, the decisive moment has come at last, and so far everything favours us. What a blessing that this street is so deserted to-night that probably no one will notice your sentry-box being for a quarter of an hour empty!" cried Harold, his eyes blazing with excitement as he throws off his domino and crimson velvet cloak. "Do you remember my instructions? You are to stay at the ball until it is over, making yourself rather conspicuous in the neighbourhood of the prince and marquis, who by this means will be put off the scent as regards me at first, for I strongly suspect the news will reach them before they leave the ball. My plans are so carefully laid as to make any chance of capture in my own case out of the question, I think, especially as to-morrow is Shrove Tuesday, when not only Rome but all the environs are in the wildest confusion, while you will probably be given up as another case of mysterious disappearance. You and the young person are to follow us before daybreak, meeting us where I appointed if you hear nothing from me to the contrary in the meantime, and then, my boy—vive l'amour!"

Five minutes later the two figures leave the restaurant, but strange to say behind the mask gleam black eyes instead of blue, and just visible below the helmet is a row of yellow curls. Sir Walter Raleigh reappears at the ball, where his short absence has been unnoticed, and again takes up his position near the Prince di Pallavicini, who if black looks could slay would certainly be guilty of murder this night, and it is perhaps as a sort of protection against these that Sir Walter Raleigh raises his mask no more.

The soldier, that is Lenox disguised, returns to his sentry-box and keeps watch over the palace and its surroundings.

This evening the palace is almost deserted, the prince being at the ball, leaving his daughter at home with no other companion than her watchful duenna, who is beginning to draw long sighs of relief at the thought of the speedy termination of her difficult task of keeping in the paths of decorum and propriety the unruly feet of this ungrateful princess, for in three days the wedding festivities are to be celebrated with much pomp, and after that according to the code of these good old times the lady may smile upon the objectionable Englishman as sweetly as heart can wish.

It has been a fatiguing day at the palace, which the bustle and confusion of the approaching marriage fête are already invading; but at last the two ladies are quietly taking supper in the princess's boudoir about ten o'clock, having been a good deal delayed by visitors. And what can be the meaning of this innocent-looking white powder which the younger of the ladies stealthily drops with the sugar into her companion's glass, and which even the Argus eyes of the duenna fail to discover?

Supper is over. The princess is watching rather guiltily the elder lady nodding in her chair in a most unconvincing fit of drowsiness. Finally her eyes close, her head drops back and she is dreaming sweet dreams of her approaching emancipation—doubtless. The princess gazes at her breathlessly for a few moments, then quietly steals from the room.

Outside in the dark garden and quiet street stillness reigns. The sentry below has it all to himself, and, still and motionless as his surroundings, has been staring fixedly at the palace for what seems to him an eternity, only interrupted once by a passer-by, who tapped him smartly on the shoulder—"Seclarato, is this your duty?" and the soldier quickly drew himself up in the stiffest and most bunglingly executed of military salutes to the officer frowning at him.

Eleven o'clock strikes from the adjacent church steeple—the first quarter, then the half. "An hour later, and every moment is so precious!"

murmured the man, beating an impatient tattoo on the wall of his sentry-box. "Can anything have gone wrong?"

Suddenly the attention of this most watchful of sentinels is fixed upon a figure which through the gloom he can just distinguish issuing from the palace. Is it the servant who came out twice already to bring flowers from the conservatory, or perhaps another of the evening visitors who have already raised his hopes, afterwards to bring down maledictions upon their heads several times to-night?

No. This figure disappears towards the back of the garden, and the soldier, moving at last with swift feet, turns the corner and takes his stand before a small closed door in the wall. A moment he stands breathlessly listening there. There is the sound of a key fitted into a lock, a delay—there is some difficulty in turning it, while the man outside is fairly fuming with impatience.

At last it turns; the heavy door opens with a most alarming creak, and a female figure heavily cloaked and veiled appears, starting back apparently in dismay at merely a sentry, where she had expected—what? But the next moment the sentry's arms are around her, the helmet and bayonet are flung aside, and the yellow hair she knows and loves so well is mingling with her dark locks, while a voice that for her seems sweetest music is whispering:

"It is I, Beatrice, my own love, my bride! Forgive me for frightening you. I could only let you know that I should be here to-night, as I did not know then certainly that my plan for winning you with the bayonet would be feasible. The carriage is waiting around the corner, and hurrah for Old England!"

And thus it is that we come by our lovely ancestress hanging yonder on the wall, painted in her Roman costume offering fruit to her guests, and to her I—Beatrice Pallavicini Lenox—an indebted, I suppose, for the dark hair and eyes, which contrast so strikingly with my Saxon-hued brothers and sisters, for in the various families of her descendants there has never lacked at least one Italian-tinted daughter to keep alive her name and the memory of the good old days.

FACETIA.

BAD EGGS.

THE Nihilists at Moscow have been trying to propagate Nihilism by means of manifestoes enclosed in Easter eggs, which, charged with those incendiary contents, they scatter, broadcast, about the streets. Better shells of this kind than bombs charged with physical explosives such as dynamite. Is it by means of these eggs the Nihilists hope to get rid of the yoke?

Punch.

A CHOICE OF EVILS.—Between the mines at St. Petersburg and the mines of Siberia.

Punch.

PUBLIC SPIRIT.

MRS. SMITH: "What have you gentlemen been plotting downstairs, that you look so guilty?"

MR. SMITH: "Plotting, my love! Pooh! The fact is, we've been having a serious chat about the disgraceful—yes—disgraceful way foreign hotels are—er—drained, and all that; and (in the interest of our families and other English families who go abroad in the autumn) Jones, Brown, Robinson, and—er—I, have elected ourselves into a kind of sanitary inspection committee, and have settled to pop over, just for a week or two, you know, and report upon some of the hotels at the best-known French watering-places, including—er—Paris. Rather a risky thing to do, of course, but we—er—look upon it in the light of a duty." Punch.

A REAL "EDITION DE LUXE."—A perfectly clear and readily intelligible edition of "Bradshaw."

Punch.

A MATTER OF TASTE.

MR. FLOUDE'S "discretion" has already produced its fruit. His old friend is now known as "The Sage and Onions of Chelsea."

Punch.

GROUND FOR OBJECTION.

"Me buy the property, sorr? Me be a landlord and be shot in the back! Shure there's to be no more landlords—we're all goin' to be tinnants!"

Punch.

SIR G. M. GOES IN FOR CULTURE.

"Look 'ere, Clarke. 'Appy thought I! I'll make this little room the libery, you know; 'ave a lot o' books. Mind you order me some."

"Yes, Sir Gorgius. What sort of books shall I order?"

"Oh, the best, of course, with binding and all that to match!"

"Yes, Sir Gorgius. How many shall I order?"

"Well, let me see; suppose we say a couple o' hundred yards of 'em, hay? That's about the size of it, I think!"

Punch.

DRAWING THE LINE.

A PAINTER sent in a picture this season to the Academy, which was accepted and skied. The subject is a man-of-war crossing the Equator; and the artist is now going about telling everyone that his ship is "on the line, my dear fellow, positively on the line!"

Judy.

TO A DESPAIRING LOVER.

If Laura rejecteth thy love,
What gain to be moaning and sighing,

When Dora, soft-eyed as a dove,
For lack of thy favour is dying?

That Laura should dote on a man
As old as her father is funny;
You're handsome, he's ugly as Pan—
But then, my dear youth, he has money.

While vainly you strive to secure
The love that is scarcely worth gaining,
The passion that's fervid and pure
From heartless neglect may be wanting.

And when you awake from your trance
To find that false Laura is married,
A coldness in Dora's next glance
May tell you too long you have tarried.

Arch Venus delights to annoy
Her votaries; soon she'll deride you,
Who yearn for impossible joy,
Nor seize on the pleasure beside you.

Judy.

PROVERBIAL PHILOSOPHY.

(By very many knowing ones.)

Liquor gets mighty loud after it has left the bottle.—Sloper.

Better the grease than no gravy at all.—Our Cook.

Gout don't keep the Fancy Ball a-rolling.—Jullien.

Twixt the flea and the cold it's hard to tell which will get caught first.—Keating.

It's a mighty deaf pauper that doesn't hear the dinner bell.—Bumble.

Pride doesn't count when you have a cold in the head.—Dr. Danbar.

If you are obliged to eat dirt, eat clean dirt.—Bradlaugh.

Fancy won't make the bread rise.—The Master of the Rolls.

Blind worms don't see the early birds a-coming.—The Cuckoo.

The unmanly early bird doesn't cackle when he picks up the worm—if his missus is about.

—Bird of Freedom.

Judy.

The best place to preserve "the apple of discord"—In "Family Jars."

Judy.

CAN a barm—"aid" be correctly described as a lady—"help"? Fun.

"TARIFFIC" HERESIES.—Protection and reciprocity. Fun.

A DEAF-'UN-ITION.—One who cannot hear. Fun.

AN ATROCIOUS PARTY.

LITTLE BOY: "Why do say you will only make a short visit here, mamma?"

MAMMA: "Because I do not like Mrs. Brown."

LITTLE BOY: "Why not, mamma? Is she wicked?"

MAMMA: "Far, far worse than that, my child. She is most unladylike."

A MAN is more likely to forget his first sweetheart than his first pipe.

Fun.

IN SOUTH AFRICA.

[By the new regulations a soldier convicted of certain offences will be allowed to choose whether he will be imprisoned or flogged.]

COLONEL: "Well, Smith, the court has found you guilty! which do you prefer, twelve months in jail or fifty lashes? You have your choice."

PRIVATE SMITH: "I think I'll take the whipping, your honour. They say at home that a licking in these parts is no disgrace."

Moonshine.

THE man at the wheel.—A bicyclist.

Moonshine.

A FOOTHOLD.—A boot.

Moonshine.

IRISH SETTLERS.—Masked assassins.

Moonshine.

HILARIOUS QUIERY.

Is a Brad—"laugh" in these days of Sergeant-at-Arms coercion a species of "chuck"—le?

Funny Folks.

NEW MOTTO FOR THE CORPORATION.—"Facile Day-caucus."

Funny Folks.

"THE Metal World" is the latest thing in journalistic speculation, "designed to fill an undoubted vacancy" (let us hope this does not refer to the proprietor's pocket). Its price is only a "copper," but it refers not only to the common, but the precious metals, and appeals to men of metal of all kinds—goldbeaters, brass-workers, silversmiths, tinsmiths, coppersmiths, whitesmiths, blacksmiths, &c. If only one-half the Smiths in England were to take it in, this new "World" would produce so much tin that the fortunate speculator would find it quite a gold mine.

Funny Folks.

MOTTO FOR PAUPERS.—"An Englishman's workhouse is his castle."

Funny Folks.

VERY "ENGAGING" PEOPLE.—Servants' registry-office keepers.

Funny Folks.

NOT BY THE HEAD-ITOR.

Or what shape is the cranium of a person who is particularly "long-headed"?—A nob long.

Funny Folks.

It is said that Mr. Millais has orders on hand for portraits to the money value of £40,000.

A WHITE crow is a rare bird, but a yellow one, such as was recently shot in Colorado, is rarer still, and probably even unknown heretofore. The captor of this remarkable specimen skinned it and forwarded the prepared skin to the Smithsonian Institution at Washington by mail.

HER Majesty has communicated through Lord Rowton her desire to undertake the charge of Master Coningsby Disraeli's education. She will defray his expenses at Eton, and send him to whatever university his father may desire him to enter. It is also stated that the Queen intends to confer a peerage upon him, in order that the title of Beaconsfield may remain upon the roll of English barons, and that the peerage may be transmitted to posterity. Prince Leopold, the youngest son of Her Majesty, is said to have contracted a warm friendship for this fortunate youth.



[A LADY'S GLOVE.]

THE ARCHERY QUEEN'S GLOVES.

A SHORT STORY.

(COMPLETE IN THIS NUMBER.)

THERE was to be a test round of the Mayvale Archery Club. To make the occasion more enjoyable for her cousin, Mr. Harley Paige, who was on a visit to her from town, Miss Somers was giving, in the woodland adjacent to the village, a kind of garden fête, with music, dancing, refreshments, and all the pleasant accessories of such an entertainment.

Of the blithe spirits gathered at the fete none were blither than the young hostess. It was openly said too that she would win the prize when the time came to shoot for it; but in the meanwhile she was unwearied in her efforts to please her guests, and Harley Paige was indefatigable in assisting her.

"He is a perfect model of the chivalric cousin," said Madge to a group of her friends a moment after Paige had departed to execute one of her commissions.

"It is at least easy to see," said Miss Trevor, "that he hies to do your bidding with the swiftness of an Ariel."

"A Machiavellian Ariel," said Marian Stoddard, who was thinking of her cousin, Walter

Lyndon, and did not wish to see him supplanted in Madge's regards.

No more was said on the subject, as at that moment Harley Paige returned, and with him Walter Lyndon. They came to prefer a request that the archery should not be longer delayed.

"Very well," said Madge. "Cousin Harley, will you speak to the musicians, and tell them to stop? And will you," looking at Lyndon, and slightly lowering her own voice to an echo of his tender tone, "will you attend to having the ground marked off, and see that everything is in place there? Marian, will not you, Miss Trevor, and the rest, hunt up those stray couples in the grove? I will see the croquet players, and have them suspend their games awhile in order to see what proficients practice may make in the art of drawing bows."

"Bows, or beaux, fair cousin?" called back Harley Paige, as he and Lyndon went in different directions to do her bidding.

"I will not be ready to decide upon that question until after our archery meeting," she answered him, laughingly.

He stopped, and half turned back.

"Perhaps there may be questions of graver import for you to decide then," he said, firing a random shaft.

It went straight to the mark, evidently, for his beautiful cousin coloured deeply; but her natural coquetry came to her aid, and, as her companions were all gone, she asked, quickly:

"Why? Have you a riddle of life to propound to me?"

A heavy frown contracted his brows for one second, then, moving closer to her, he said, significantly:

"It may be the riddle of more lives than one, though I be no Sphinx, and you no Edipus, sweet cousin."

She had never seen just such an expression in his eyes before, and somehow she resented it.

"Not aspiring to be an Edipus, I may decline either to hear or answer riddles," she said. "Anyhow, I shall have no interest in anything until I have won this archery prize."

"But when you have won it will you be in a frame of mind to answer a question which will be no riddle, but will only require a simple 'yes' or 'no'?"

Madge could but understand the significance of his manner, but she caught at a device for evading his intention.

"If I lose, if you hit the 'gold,' I will engage to answer any question you may choose to ask."

But at the same time she smiled wickedly, knowing that she shot better than he did.

Hesitating but a second, he answered, gravely:

"Very well. Only you know that as the challenged party, the 'code of honour' grants to me the choice of weapons, target, etc. On these conditions I am willing to risk such a trial of skill with you."

"I accept the conditions," she replied, quickly, seeing Lyndon returning towards them, "of course, I reserving to myself the right to answer your question, 'yes' or 'nay,' as it suits me best."

He bowed, but a dangerous flame kindled in his eyes as she turned to greet Lyndon, who had come back to tell her the Archery Club had all assembled.

Madge moved off with Lyndon, and Paige fell back, joining one of the other girls.

"Now," said Lyndon to himself, "is my time."

For he was tormented with jealousy of Paige, and as they walked on he told her of his love.

"A love which had grown with his growth, and strengthened with his strength," he said.

And indeed in telling it he was but giving voice to what, up to to-day, he had supposed had long been understood between them. Madge was coquettish enough, however, to keep him in suspense for a while.

"If," she said, drawing off the dainty embroidered glove from her left hand and tossing it toward him, "if I hit the 'gold' or make the best score I will give you the mate to this, and you may regard it as 'my hand with my heart in it.' Will that do?"

"You cruel Miranda," he said, reproachfully. "Surely Ferdinand was never so tormented."

The "cruel Miranda" started forward with an exclamation of distress. They had paused by a spring that lay in their way, but her glove that she had given to Lyndon had slipped down the rock toward the spring. Lyndon sprang forward to catch it, when, lo! his watch dropped from its chain and fell with a crash upon the stones.

"Ah! how sorry I am," said Madge, looking bewitchingly penitent. "I fear your beautiful watch is quite broken to pieces."

"No, I hope not," he answered, gathering up the dilapidated time-piece. "It is principally the crystal I think, though the hinge is loosened too. But, Madge, dear," he went on, glancing up at her and speaking in their old way of wheedling, "if you really are awfully sorry you can pay me back for this as well as for all the other mischief you have wrought for me. Give me the mate to your glove now—mateless a glove is of no use to anyone or for anything."

"Yes, it is," answered the wilful girl. "There is a use for this one now. Give me the watch and glove and I will show you."

Without a word he obeyed. Deftly removing the fragments of the crystal from its dial-plate she dropped the watch into the glove, securely

ties the tassels about its wrist, and then smilingly handed the improvised watch fob back.

"There, you see you have watch, hinges, and everything safe until a jeweller can see if the mechanism be quite spoiled. Put it in that upper side pocket to keep it safely."

"Safe enough it will be," he answered, obeying her directions, and slipping the glove and watch inside his breast pocket, "and close to my heart too, Madge. But it is very lonely. Give me its mate, dear, will you not?"

Miss Somers shook her head, but how she might have withheld his persistent pleading none can say, for at that moment came a shout from the archery ground.

"They are calling us," cried Madge, and hurried on, and Lyndon was fain to follow.

But Harley Paige, though apparently engrossed by Miss Trevor, had been noticing the couple, and quite understood the new light in Madge's eyes and the half-triumphant look of Lyndon.

"There is a new understanding between them," he hissed through his clenched teeth.

Then as they came up he caught a gleam of yellow light just above Lyndon's breast pocket. He glanced suspiciously from it to the long buttoned glove that Miss Somers had on her right hand. The yellow light was from a gilt button exactly identical with the eight that shone on his cousin's glove.

A hearty round of applause greeted Miss Somers's first effort with the bow, for she made a close shave of the "bull's eye." Her cousin was the first to congratulate her.

"I shall never be able to cope with you at archery, Madge," he said, smiling. "But I do not give up hope, for I have the choice of weapons you know. I have too selected a target which I know will steady and nerve my arm."

"Ah," she asked, interested, "what have you chosen for a target then?"

He glanced at the glove she was twirling.

"Do you think I might be able," he asked, "to shoot that top button from your glove if set up in your garland over there?"

She shook her head.

"I think not," she said.

"Nevertheless I choose your glove as my target at that distance."

"But—but," she stammered, slightly embarrassed. "I do not care to have my pretty glove ruined so. Why not choose some other mark?"

He laughed a little oddly.

"I chose that because you gave me the privilege of choosing, but I would be quite as content with the mate of that one. Where is the left hand glove? I would prefer it."

"My other glove?" asked Madge, colouring still more deeply. "Oh, I lost it, somewhere."

"Ah!" he said, speaking with an affectation of indifference. "Somewhere about the spring, doubtless. Well, this one will have to do; and as its fellow is lost, the loss of a button from a mateless glove can make no difference to you."

Still smiling he turned away, as other archers came to claim Miss Somers's attention. After that she drew her bow in desperate earnest, anxious if possible to distance her cousin.

She did distance every competitor, not only winning the title of Archery Queen, but gaining the silver-shafted arrow, which was chief prize.

Her cousin was the one selected to make the presentation speech. Having gracefully acquitted himself of that duty he begged the indulgence of the club while he should accept the challenge of their queen to a trial of skill, with weapons chosen by himself.

In the place of the "gold" in the centre of their "garland" he would set up, he said, Miss Somers's glove; and with a pistol shot, fired from the utmost bounds of the archery ground, he hoped to rob it of one of its tiny buttons. In this way, he added, he might prove to her majesty that his aim was not always as false as in the contest just passed.

"My fair cousin, the glove, if you please," he said, stepping down from the platform.

She hesitated an instant. Her glance wan-

dered to Lyndon, a few yards distant; but the latter's face was partly turned from her and appeared cold and stern. Madge rebelled at once at what appeared premature as well as unjust judgment of her. She laughed lightly, therefore, tossing the glove to Paige.

"Only," she said, "you are to flatten the button, but not to make a hole in the kid."

He bowed, but moved away without a word. When he had pinned the glove to the centre of the "gold," with the gilt button in full view, he took his case of pistols from the servant whom he had sent to the village for them.

"Here are the pistols—you can take your choice," he said to Miss Somers.

"But I do not want either of them," she said, indignantly. "I have an utter horror of the cold, treacherous things, you know."

He smiled, showing his white teeth.

"But, fair cousin, if you do not fire one round with me how are the judges to decide whether I win or you lose in the contest?"

"Then you must appoint your proxy," he said.

The Archery Queen looked around upon her circle of subjects who were crowding about her, many of them evidently eager to be selected for the honour proposed. Lyndon was on the outer edge of the circle, and was the only one who seemed indifferent.

"Mr. Lyndon," called her clear voice, "you made the second best score in our contest—will you now uphold the prowess of your leader?"

He came forward immediately, and, with a single glance at her, accepted the pistol.

Harley Paige bowed to them both and led the way to the stand. Somehow Madge Somers felt a spasm to see those two pitted against each other with deadly weapons in their hands. She held back, shutting her ears.

There was another shout of applause, like that which had greeted her own triumph. Going forward she found that Harley Paige had won. His bullet had sped straight to the "gold."

The Archery Queen was a little pale and tremulous, but she tried to smile gaily as she inspected the glove that was now brought to her.

"But, cousin," she objected, thrusting her finger through a hole in the palm, "you have not kept your agreement. Here is my glove pierced quite through."

"My aim was at the button, as you will see," said her cousin, coolly.

Lyndon bit his lip.

"I fear I am the guilty one," he said.

A tender light flashed into her eyes, and her cheeks grew rosy as she turned to him.

"Then it does not so much matter," she said, "for the glove was to be yours, you know."

Harley Paige made one stride toward them.

"I heard no such agreement," he said, fiercely.

Miss Somers faced him mockingly.

"Cousin Harley, she said, in her most dulcet tones, "does it invariably require three or more to enter into an agreement which can only concern two?"

"But," he answered, hardly able to master the tempest of passion rising within him, "my understanding was that the glove was to be mine."

"For a target, yes. To be retained as a memento, no. Of what service could a mateless glove be to anyone, cousin mine?"

"Ah!" he said, recovering his cool self-possession, "your champion has then found the left-hand glove which you lost at the spring? Nevertheless, I will assert my claim to this."

"A claim which I shall deny," said Walter Lyndon, quietly reaching forward to take the mutilated glove from Madge.

As she yielded the disputed trophy into his hand she cast a half-sly look at him, and one wholly deprecating toward her cousin. The

latter lifted his hat, turning away without a word.

Madge heaved a sigh of relief. Her cousin had decided then to accept her flat. The few revellers lingering still on the archery ground were not a little surprised by the peculiar turn the affair was taking.

They could not understand, indeed, Mr. Harley Paige's quiet acceptance of his cousin's decision against himself and in favour of his rival. One or two possibly had a suspicion that the iciness of his manner belied the red-hot anger seething in his heart. Of all this Lyndon probably had a clearer insight than any other. But he forgot everything else when at last he and Madge found it possible to slip away together.

The happy pair only returned from their woodland stroll when warned by muttering thunders that a storm was threatening. Reaching the pavilion they found the dancers, croquet players, all the party indeed, intent upon a hasty retreat to the village.

Some of the chaperones had already departed, and others were crowding into phaetons and carriages anxious to be gone. Lyndon soon found the Somers coachman, and as the carriage was a large covered one several of Miss Somers's lady guests deserted the less secure landaus, gigs, and other open conveyances to crowd in with their young hostess, who made room for as many as could enter.

"We will take you in too if you want to come," she said, with a bright smile, to Lyndon.

"Thanks," he gaily answered. "If I had to die just now it would be a happy fate to expire surrounded by so much sweetness."

There were smiles, and bows, and farewell wavings; then a fading nebula of bright faces, and Will Somers, linking his arm in Lyndon's, drew him back from the pavilion.

At the far end Harley Paige and Col. Hanson were talking earnestly together.

"Walter," asked Will, when they were beyond hearing, "what is this romantic foolishness between you and Madge which has brought Harley and yourself to daggers' points?"

Lyndon looked amazed, then indignant.

"I do not understand," he said, coldly. "There is no romantic foolishness between your sister and myself, unless you think her promise given me to-day to become my wife is that."

"Will's eyes glistened, and he clasped his friend's hand enthusiastically.

"God bless you and Madge both, Walter. I did not know of this."

"Neither," said Lyndon, with a smile, "have I known of it for more than two or three hours. Nor would I have told you of it yet but for your question. But what do you mean about a trouble between Paige and myself? I know of none, unless indeed he intends to dispute my claim to the glove which Madge gave me this afternoon."

"That is just it," said Walter, excitedly. "I heard him tell Colonel Hanson you must surrender it or answer for the consequences."

"I shall not relinquish the glove," said Lyndon.

"For Heaven's sake, Walter, do not say so," pleaded Will, eagerly. "Give the miserable, tattered thing if Harley wants it. It is nothing. Madge can give you a score of better ones. Think of her, Walter."

"I do think of her, Will. It is because I think of her that I refuse to relinquish her glove. You do not know the circumstances of the gift, Somers. Nor have I time to explain, for there comes Colonel Hanson to meet us, and he is the bearer of a note, I see. I will not give up the glove. It is enough for me that it is Madge's and that she is my promised wife. But you will stand by me, Somers?"

"To the bitter end, Lyndon. Yet I beg you to let us compromise this matter if possible. If not for your sake, for the sake of Madge."

There was no time for further expostulation, as Colonel Hanson was already within hearing. He advanced quickly toward them, and, with a grave bow, handed a note to Lyndon.

Walter opened and read it, hurriedly, a flush

of anger rising to his cheek. Crushing the paper in his hand he passed it on to Somers, saying, haughtily, to Colonel Hanson:

"Please tell your friend that my answer to his proposition is an unequivocal one: I decline to surrender the glove."

"I hope," said Colonel Hanson, "that you will reconsider this determination. My friend is much in earnest. If your answer is final—"

"I do not usually change my decision without reasons, and as it stands I certainly decline to surrender the glove, and that decision you may convey to your friend as final."

Colonel Hanson gravely lifted his hat.

"Then, acting for Mr. Harley Paige," he said, "I must beg, Mr. Lyndon, that you will at once fix time and place for the settlement of this disputed matter."

"I am ready to allow Mr. Paige whatever satisfaction he thinks himself entitled to," returned Lyndon. "Nor can I think of a more convenient season than now, or a more suitable place than here. However, for more definite arrangements, I refer you to my friend, Mr. Somers, who will confer with you."

The conference followed without further debate, pistols were the weapons agreed upon, and the place of meeting was to be the archery clearing in the woodland. The meeting itself was to take place as soon as the fete ground was cleared of stragglers.

"But I tell you it's my opinion, Colonel Hanson," said impetuous Will, his heart shrinking with fear for his friend, "that it will be nothing less than a cold-blooded murder, for Harley is a dead shot, while Walter is quite unskilled."

"I certainly never saw a finer shot than that of Mr. Paige's this afternoon," said the colonel, "nor a worse one than Mr. Lyndon's, and it would be better if the latter would reconsider—"

Young Somers made a gesture of fierce impatience.

"Walter is not one to reconsider in such a matter, and for my part I cannot see why Harley or any man should wish to fight for a glove, when it is that of another's affianced wife. Lyndon and my sister have become betrothed since that matter of the glove came off."

Colonel Hanson started, looking surprised.

"If that is so," he said, "the face of affairs is altered. If you will kindly permit me to communicate this to Mr. Paige we may yet compromise this unfortunate affair."

"I will tell Harley myself," said Will, quickly. "He is surely not the man to persist in such a claim under the circumstances, unless he has simply set his heart on Lyndon's destruction."

But when he had remonstrated with his cousin, concluding with the announcement of his sister's betrothal to her old playmate, the handsome face of Harley Paige grew cold and grey as flint.

"If you kill Lyndon it is my opinion you will be guilty of a cold-blooded murder," said Will, hotly.

"I believe I have not asked for your opinion," returned the other, coolly. "Colonel Hanson," he added, glancing up at the sombre sky overhead, "don't you think it advisable to hurry on this affair? The storm is imminent and the grounds seem deserted."

"Yes," returned the colonel, "there is no one here now beside ourselves and my servant with the drag. We are quiet ready when Mr. Somers and his friend are."

"We are at your service," returned Will.

The paces were measured off and the two principals stepped into position. The expression of Paige's face was cold, determined, cruel. Lyndon was resolute, but showed no defiance.

There were a few short directions given. Then the fatal command rang forth in Colonel Hanson's deep tones.

"One—two—three—Fire!"

A single sharp report followed, rounded off by a distant roar of thunder. At the same instant young Somers uttered a quick exclamation and

sprang forward. Lyndon had staggered a pace or two and now fell heavily to the ground.

Harley Paige still stood erect, his discharged pistol lowered to his side. Colonel Hanson also hurried to the aid of the wounded man. But Will had already lifted him in his arms.

"He is dead," he said, with a quick shudder. See. The ball went in here and must have gone directly through his heart. Harley," he cried, lifting his anguished face to his cousin, who now came forward. "I hope you are satisfied. You have murdered Lyndon and broken my sister's heart. Are you content?"

"If I have the glove I might be," answered his cousin.

With a sudden angry impulse Will thrust his hand into Walter's side pocket and drew forth the grey glove.

It had now another hole through its dainty embroidery, and the long tassels and the fingers were stained with blood. He dashed it at his cousin. It fell across Harley's extended hand, but with a bitter imprecation the latter shook it off. It struck the ground with a dull little thud. But on Paige's hand was a splotch of blood.

Will saw it.

"Ha!" he cried, excitedly, "may you know, Harley, what it is to have Walter's blood on your soul as it is on your hand. May that stain haunt you as Duncan's blood haunted Macbeth. May it give you no repose day or night till it call down God's vengeance upon you."

Meanwhile Colonel Hanson had been carefully examining Lyndon's wound.

"He is not dead at least," he said, looking up at this moment. "The aim was only too sure. But something has diverted the ball, causing it to range below the heart. Ah! here is the explanation," running his hand into the pocket from which Will Somers had drawn his sister's glove, and pulling out Lyndon's watch wrapped in the other glove, the one which Madge had given him at the spring.

Colonel Hanson as he spoke had passed the package to Will, and for a moment there was a significant silence between the two.

Paige, who had turned away with a muttered curse at Will's words, now came up.

"What is it?" he asked, speaking huskily.

Will Somers showed him the battered edge of the watch and its torn wrapping.

"Madge's poor little gloves have been the cause of an immense deal of mischief, Harley," he said. "But I trust in God they have been the means of saving Lyndon's life after all."

Again with a muttered curse his cousin turned on his heel and strode off, only this time he stooped and picked up the other glove, carrying it with him to a tree some distance away where he sat down, laying the trophy so fatally won across his knee.

Colonel Hanson, who had some surgical skill, busied himself meantime putting a compress on Lyndon's wound, and very soon he announced to Will that he thought Lyndon might be moved.

"My drag and servant are at your service," he said, courteously. "I must remain to return with Mr. Harley Paige when he is ready to go back to Mayvale."

Accepting his offer gladly Somers and he, with the groom's assistance, soon had the wounded man lifted into the drag. There, supported by Will, he was driven slowly to the village.

Colonel Hanson watched them disappear and then reported himself at once to his principal. But Paige angrily refused his company.

"I shall not go back to the village until the officers come to take me thither," he said, harshly. "They will doubtless swarm like vultures in the next hour or two. Meanwhile I would prefer to be left to myself."

In vain the colonel sought to change his resolution.

"It will," he said, "make against you in the trial."

But Paige was not to be influenced, and Colonel Hanson at last turned from him, and mounting Lyndon's horse rode briskly in pursuit of the drag. Secretly he hoped too that Paige might take advantage of his absence and make his

escape. By way of precaution however he was careful to carry away the brace of pistols.

He had scarcely overtaken the drag when the storm, brooding so long, broke upon them with terrific violence. Fortunately they were in a close neighbourhood to the village, and Lyndon was soon safely housed, and the most skilful surgeon in Mayvale promptly in attendance.

With such terrific force did the storm rage that for two hours or more the duel was kept a profound secret. Then the officers of the law got scent of the affair. Paige was arrested without difficulty, for he had not moved from the place where Colonel Hanson had left him.

He was sitting at the root of a giant oak, his head thrown back against its trunk. One of his handarested on a little blood-stained glove lying across his knee. His upturned face was white and rigid, but wore still an expression of sullen anger, or baffled malice.

From the top to the bottom of the oak tree ran a gaping, jagged seam. The lightning, in cutting its channel, had taken Harley Paige in its course. So Walter Lyndon's would-be murderer had been already brought to justice. From the bar of Supreme Judgment he could not be remanded to any petty earthly tribunal.

But Lyndon did not die, and when they told Madge how her gloves had wrought so much mischief they told her too the better mission they had accomplished in saving the life of her lover.

VALUABLE RUBBISH.

TURNING from nature's process to that of man, we find that he is doing his best, however clumsily, to follow the thrifty example she sets him. For many and many a year no doubt the pine tree abed its pointed, needle-like leaves in the Silesian forests, and there they were left to decay and turn into mould at their leisure, until M. Pannewitz started a manufactory for converting them into forest-wool, which, besides being efficacious in cases of rheumatism when applied in its woolly state, can also be curled, felted or woven. Mixed with cotton, it has even been used for blankets and wearing apparel.

The history of gas making best shows the value of "rubbish." To begin with. The coal which yields most gas is termed "cannel" coal, and has been worth from twenty-five to thirty shillings a ton or more; whereas fifty years ago, before the introduction of gas, it was looked upon as almost worthless. In distilling coal for gas, a liquor is produced which for a long time was so great an inconvenience to the gas companies that they actually paid for permission to drain it into the common sewers as the simplest way of getting rid of it. This gas liquor contains salts of ammonia, together with naphtha and tar, and the tar is now made by repeated distillation to yield pitch, benzole, creosote, carbolic acid, the substance known as paraffine, and aniline.

It seems strange now that these valuable products should ever have been thrown away as useless; still stranger is it to learn that we derive from one of these waste substances the whole series of beautiful colours called aniline dyes. Naphthaline is another residuary product, by a novel application of which it is said that the light-giving properties of gas may be enhanced fourfold at a trifling cost. But the uses to which the waste liquor of the gasworks may be put are not yet exhausted; for not only is it turned to account itself, but combined with the slaty shales found among the coal, which were also at one time a source of perpetual annoyance, it yields alum—used in manufacture of paper and preparation of leather; copperas or green vitriol (sulphate of iron), used in dying, tanning and the manufacture of ink, and Prussian blue, and sulphuric acid.

Rags are now recognised as such a valuable commodity that in some countries their export is forbidden by government; nevertheless, from one source or another the papermakers of England alone import annually some eighteen or twenty thousand tons of linen and cotton rags and collect quantities at home. These rags are of varying

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24,309 48,196, 28,752; Aston- Southp 87,841, increase

BAK cupful salt the boil for cool; the an hour

CH water i size of plenty throw thick into it. Farmer four egg a froth

degrees of cleanliness, as may be imagined; some of the English ones require no bleaching at all, while those of Italy bear away the palm for dirt. Old sails are made into the paper used for banknotes, so it is said, and old ropes reappear as brown paper; but many other things beside flax, hemp and cotton are now used in the manufacture, and paper is made and remade over again. Not a scrap of paper need be wasted, for there are plenty of persons ready to buy it, and if not good enough for remanufacture as paper, it can always be converted into papier maché, no matter what its colour or quality.

Cuttings of paper made by bookbinders, pasteboard makers, envelope cutters, pocket-book makers and paper-hangers are readily bought up; and so, too, are tons' weight of old ledgers and account books, by the papier-maché manufacturer, together with old letters and other paper rubbish, giving a pledge that all shall be promptly consigned to destruction in his large vat; and out of this heterogeneous assemblage he produces a substance so hard and firm and durable that it has been suggested as suitable for making soldiers' huts and even ships.

STATISTICS.

From the annual report on recruiting we learn that during the year 25,622 recruits joined the army, a decrease of 305 as compared with the previous year, and 2,703 less than in 1878; of these 7,949 enlisted from the Militia, an increase of 774 on the previous year, and 200 more than in 1878.

ACCORDING to latest statistics the number of milk cows kept in the leading dairying countries of the world are as follows: Germany, 8,962,221; France, 4,513,765; Great Britain and Ireland, 3,708,766; Denmark, 800,000; Sweden, 1,356,576; Norway, 741,574; Switzerland, 592,463; and the United States, 13,000,000.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN EXPORTS AND IMPORTS.—The exports from this colony during 1880 amounted to £800,000 more than those of 1879, and the imports exceeded those of 1879 by £500,000.

THE CENSUS.—The last returns show that the population of St. Marylebone is 155,004; since 1871 a decrease of 4,165; Islington has 282,620, or 68,842 more than in 1871; St. Pancras, 236,208, increase 14,743; Hastings, 42,256, or 12,967 more than in 1871; Reading, 42,050, or 9,737 more than in 1871; Hackney, 163,609, increase 48,542; Oldham, 111,343, increase 28,714; Bolton, 105,450, increase 22,596; Blackburn, 104,012, increase 27,675; Preston, 96,525, increase 11,098; Rochdale, 68,865, increase 24,309; Burnley, 63,502, increase 19,662; Wigan, 48,196, increase 9,101; Barrow, 47,097, increase 28,752; Warrington, 37,482, increase 5,338; Aston-under-Lyne, 37,049, increase 5,064; Southport, 32,164, increase 14,080; Norwich, 87,841, increase 7,459; Warminster, 13,840, decrease 1,320; Jersey, 51,020, decrease 5,600.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

BAKED HOMINY GRITS.—One quart milk, one cupful of hominy, two eggs, and a little salt; salt the milk, and boil, then stir in hominy, and boil for twenty minutes; set aside, and fully cool; beat eggs to a stiff froth, and then beat them well and hard into the hominy; bake half an hour.

CHEESE FRITTERS.—Put about a pint of water into a saucepan with a piece of butter the size of an egg, the least bit of cayenne, and plenty of black pepper. When the water boils throw gradually into it sufficient flour to form a thick paste; then take it off the fire and work into it about a quarter of a pound of grated Parmesan cheese, and then the yolks of three or four eggs and the whites of two beaten up to a froth. Let the paste rest for a couple of hours,

and proceed to fry by dropping pieces of it the size of a walnut into plenty of hot lard. Serve sprinkled with very fine salt.

LIGHT POT PIE.—One pint of sour milk or buttermilk, one teaspoonful of sour cream, and one teaspoonful of soda; add flour, and mix hard like bread, and let it stand one hour to rise. Never roll or cut it but nip it off in pieces of the size you wish; boil thirty minutes, and you will always have it as light as a puff. Almost any kind of fresh meat will make good pot pie, though chicken, beef, and veal are preferable. Prepare the meat the same as for baked chicken pie; drop one thickness of the crust all around the top of the pot. Let the pot be uncovered the first fifteen minutes, then cover it and boil fifteen minutes longer. Be sure that it does not stop boiling from the time the crust is put in until you take it up; bring it to the table immediately.

A KISS AT THE DOOR.

We were standing in the doorway—
My little wife and I—
The golden sun upon her hair
Fell down so silently;
A small white hand upon my arm,
What could I ask for more
Than the kindly glance of the loving
eyes
As she kissed me at the door?

I know she loves with all her heart
The one who stands beside!
And the years have been so joyous
Since first I called her bride!
We've had so much of happiness
Since we met in years before;
But the happiest time of all was
When she kissed me at the door.

Who cares for wealth of land or gold,
Of fame or matchless power?
It does not give the happiness
Of just one little hour
With one who loves me as her life—
She says she "loves me more"—
And I thought she did this morning
When she kissed me at the door.

If she lives till age shall scatter
The frost upon her head,
I know she'll love me just the same
As the day when we were wed.
But if the angels call her,
And she goes to Heaven before,
I shall know her when I meet her,
For she'll kiss me at the door.

MISCELLANEOUS.

LORD BEAUCONFIELD'S WILL.—Will be sworn under £20,000.

SWEEPSTAKES.—are common enough in the London Clubs in connection with the race for the Derby, these amounting to a couple of hundred pounds each, with guinea subscriptions. In India, however, the great Umballa Derby Sweep reaches the high figure of £80,000. It is subscribed to from far and near. One year it was won by a milliner living in Calcutta. Last year a clerk in a commercial house at Simla drew the favourite, but sold his chance for £1,500 to Lord William Beresford, who made a handsome profit on his purchase.

MR. MAPLESON'S OPERA HOUSE.—On the Thames Embankment is, at last, off his hands. It is to be turned into an hotel, with residential flats in its upper stories.

The Hughenden Estate, to which young Coningsby Disraeli has succeeded, is not a large property. It comprises about 1,300 acres, and realises some £2,000 a year.

The other day there was in Rotten Row a horse with spectacles on. Such a sight was

unusual. If the horse could have an eye-glass fixed in one eye, he would have looked fast if he was not so.

THE success of the National Fisheries Exhibition at Norwich has suggested the idea of a similar exhibition in the Waverley Market in Edinburgh in May or June, 1882. Such an exhibition would not only be advantageous to Scottish fisheries, but would also bring forward a large number of exhibitors, and prove a great attraction to the public.

The father of the House of Commons celebrated his seventy-eighth birthday this week. Mr. Christopher Rice Mansel Talbot, M.P., and Lord-Lieutenant of Glamorganshire, who was born on May 10th, 1803, has represented Glamorganshire in the House of Commons since 1830, having thus had a seat in Parliament for upwards of half a century, and is the only member of that body who voted at the passing of the Reform Bill in 1832. A peerage was offered to him in 1869, but he declined the honour.

A TESTIMONIAL is about to be presented to Major Walter Wingfield, the inventor of the game of lawn tennis.

A LARGE number of old Roman coins have been discovered in excavating for a new drive in course of construction at Baron-hill, the Anglesey seat of Sir E. Williams-Bulkeley, Bart.

THE "royal middies" are not expected to continue a seafaring life after their present voyage. The elder of the two is now in his 18th year, and it is said that the Prince of Wales intends to send him for a time to Oxford, where he himself spent a few terms.

ACCORDING to the "Golos" of St. Petersburg, it is intended to abolish public executions in Russia.

A WOMAN who was rescued from a tottering building during the recent earthquake at Cassimoccio, was found to have become insane through fear.

A TELEGRAM from Montreal states that the strike of workmen on the Great Trunk Railway has now terminated.

THOMAS SHAW has died at Gurteen from alcoholic poisoning. He made a bet that he would drink a tincanful of "poteen," and after consuming a quantity of it he fell down speechless, and expired in an hour.

ELECTRICITY has been adopted as a means of punishment in the Ohio State prison. All criminals guilty of disobedience or other offences are subjected to shocks sufficiently powerful to annoy them exceedingly.

THERE lies buried near Naples not only the cities of Herculaneum and Pompeii, but another which flourished a thousand years before Christ, the ancient city of Cumæ. Few remains now exist to stimulate the mind of the traveller.

THE Panama Canal works are proceeding with great activity. Broad roads already connect the two oceans, and the engineers conclude from surveys that the construction of the canal will be a comparatively easy matter.

SPURIOUS coins representing half-sovereigns of the date 1874 are at present in circulation. The genuine half-sovereign is so cleverly imitated that without great care tradespeople may easily be victimised. The spurious coin is, however, lighter than the genuine one, and by this peculiarity it may at once be detected.

CUSTOM House officials have discovered that consignments of factory plant may prove to be a "plant" in more than one sense of the term, and that innocent-looking machinery from Belgium may in fact contain plant of a character which is produced largely in Virginia. A few days ago four or five iron boilers were unshipped at the London Docks, when some keen-eyed or keen-nosed officer discovered that one of the boilers, outwardly resembling the others exactly, was in fact a dummy. It was made of cast iron instead of wrought, and contained no less than five tons of tobacco, the metal being so adjusted that the total weight of the sham boiler did not materially vary from that of the real ones. The consignment was made from a Belgic to a Yorkshire port and thence to London. The ingenuity of the contrivance suggests that it is not a new one. At any rate it was a good big attempt at smuggling.

June 4, 1881.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

OUR CORRESPONDENTS should in all cases furnish us with their names and addresses. Letters signed simply with initials or a nom de plume may not always receive immediate attention, as our space is limited. No charge is made under any circumstances for advertisements appearing on this page.

WILLIAM S.—The loadstone is a certain part of the iron ore. It was discovered by mere chance in the thirteenth century that if this part of the ore was suspended on a point and allowed to turn itself at pleasure it would always point to the north. For this remarkable fact philosophers have not as yet assigned any reason.

C. H. R.—To curl feathers, heat them slightly before the fire and then stroke them with the back of a knife.

M. M.—To soften corns, saturate a rag with lemon juice and bind it round the toes which give you trouble. Repeat the application until the corns are sufficiently softened to be dislodged with a pair of scissors.

C. H. R.—If a gentleman acts as escort to a lady at night he should offer her his arm, and not wait for her to take it.

J. W. P.—For catarrh, snuff up the nose occasionally a little table salt. We have known a great many persons to be much benefited, if not cured, by this simple remedy.

A. S.—A bad breath is sometimes remedied by taking a teaspoonful of powdered charcoal in a third of a tumbler of water.

R. W.—Try Seltzer water for heartburn.

JOHN G.—We cannot tell you how to make Eubine or Bark Beer—if we could you would probably not be able to produce it so satisfactorily as the manufacturers to whom we referred a week or two ago.

LINK BY LINK.—After death is the correct interpretation.

WALTER C.—For answers to queries 1 and 3 write to the Editor of the "Metal World," 42, Essex Street, Strand, London. 2. For soury oranges, lemons, lime-juice, cider, and vinegar are beneficial; also fresh animal food, with an abundant supply of vegetables, such as cabbage, water-cress, wormwood, ground ivy and soury grass. A tonic containing bark is often prescribed. An answer to this later on.

HARRY J.—We do not know what the peculiarities mentioned indicate other than loose-jointedness, which in in a certain sense might be considered suppleness. 2. See answer to Walter C. 3. Pepper (especially cayenne) is not considered injurious—many persons esteem it as highly beneficial.

HARRY J.—Every advertisement is genuine and inserted free of charge as soon as space permits. Responses similarly treated.

"PUG," LEEDS.—If you send your MS. (with stamps to cover postage in the event of its being returned or unsuitable) it will receive the unbiased attention of the editor; and if printed would be paid for at a fair value.

N. B. N.—Belladonna has the property of dilating the pupil of the eye and rendering it insensible to light, and is often used for this purpose by oculists during the performance of operations for cataract. It should never be used for any purpose except by the advice of a physician, as it is a powerful poison.

H. T. A.—One way to preserve natural flowers is to dip them in melted perfume, withdrawing them quickly. The liquid should be only just hot enough to maintain its fluidity, and the flowers should be dipped one at a time, held by the stalks and moved about for an instant to get rid of air bubbles. The flowers should also be free from moisture.

R. L.—Ordinarily ice forms at the surface of water. On cooling, water contracts in volume—becomes denser—until it reaches a temperature of about 39° Fahr.; if cooled below this point it gradually expands—becomes lighter—until at about 32° Fahr. it congeals. Water chilled at the surface contracts and sinks, the warmer and lighter water rising to the surface. This continues until the whole body of water is chilled to 39° Fahr. From this point to 32° the colder water remains at the surface and there congeals. In shallow and turbulent water ice sometimes forms at the bottom, and becoming attached to stones, rocks, etc., does not rise.

ELIZA, EMILY and KATIE, three friends, would like to correspond with three young gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Eliza is twenty-two, tall, fair hair, blue eyes, good-looking, fond of children. Emily is nineteen, tall, dark hair and eyes, fond of children. Katie is seventeen, medium height, dark hair, hazel eyes, fond of children.

GIRY and TILLY, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Giry is twenty-one, medium height, brown hair and eyes, fond of home and music. Tilly is twenty-two, medium height, brown hair and eyes, fond of home and dancing.

BLANCHE and HARRIET, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Blanche is twenty-four, medium height, brown hair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition, fond of home and music. Harriet is nineteen, tall, fair, brown eyes, fond of home and dancing.

PRESENT AND FUTURE.

MAIDEN, with eyes of amber, with glances tender and true,
Filled with a heart's reflections, patterns the love-god weaves,
Meeting my own responsive, lighting as though they knew
This was the best and sweetest, truest of New Year's eyes.
Flashing their soft, seductive spells,
Loving and brave and bright,
While in the distance the chiming bells
Hal low the winter's night.

Whispering glad words, softly-sweet words, loving and low—
Cadenced for one ear only, not for the bustling crowd,
While through the meanning branches winds of the winter blow,
Shows in the purest ermine weaving the old year's shroud.
Now, as the old year dies away,
Pledge we our love anew;
Love is loyal and strong to stay.
Brown eyes linked to the blue.

Yet are there trying moments, shadows and twilights grey,
Doubts in the dusky distance, sorrow and troublous tears;
Clouds that are threatening darkly there where the lightnings play,
Over the possible somethings haunting the unborn years;
Hast though the faith that standeth fast,
Though the dread tempest rave,
Steadfast ever from first to last,
Reaching beyond the grave?

Oh, there are many moments lighted with love like this,
Many the hearts united pledged unto weal or woe;
Yet will they break asunder, floating away from bliss.
Rocked by the rising tempest, tossing them to and fro;
Hearts have loved since the sons of men
Lived in their tents of old;
Hearts have broken or chilled again,
Faith turned careless or cold.

Yet were there nobler mortals linked in the holy bands,
Bound by affection's token, born of the joys above;
Strong in their faith's completeness, honest in hearts and hands,
Joined though the world opposed them, great in the grace of love;
True though the fiery tongues of flame
Threatened, and hope had fled;
One in life though the curses came,
One in the grave when dead.

Hast thou that love unfailing, fullest of faith that lies
Deeper than frosts of feeling, higher than tempests' reach?
True to its soul companion, proof against ill's surprise,
Full of that close completeness lives of the martyrs teach?

Then shall we both that refuge find—
Fulness of good the sum—
Courageous always, calm and kind,
Safe through the years to come. I. E. J.

WALTER J. D., JAMES W. W. and F. W. G., three seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with three young ladies with a view to matrimony. Walter J. D. is twenty-two, medium height, fair, blue eyes, fond of home and children. James W. W. is twenty-two, tall, dark, good-looking, fond of home and children. F. W. G. is twenty-one, tall, fair, blue eyes, good-looking, fond of home and children.

AUDACIOUS, ARGUS and PALAIS, three seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with three young ladies. Audacious is twenty-four, tall, dark, of a loving disposition, fond of home. Argus is twenty-five, fair, medium height, of a loving disposition. Palais is twenty-one, tall, fair, of a loving disposition, fond of home and children.

APONIS, sixteen, medium height, brown hair, dark eyes, would like to correspond with a young lady about the same age.

BICYCLING TED, tall, fond of home and children, would like to correspond with a young lady between sixteen and nineteen.

HONESTY, JUSTICE and WEAVER TOM, three friends, would like to correspond with three young ladies between eighteen and twenty with a view to matrimony. Honesty is twenty-four, medium height, fair hair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition, fond of home and music. Justice is twenty-two, tall, dark, blue eyes, fond of music and singing. Weaver Tom is twenty, tall, dark, grey eyes, fond of music and dancing.

BOW LIGHT and STAY LIGHT, two seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young ladies with a view to matrimony. Bow Light is twenty-three, medium height, dark, fond of home and music. Stay Light is twenty-two, medium height, dark, of a loving disposition. Respondents must be fond of home and music.

S. M. and K. K., two pupil teachers, would like to correspond with two seamen in the Royal Navy. S. M. is twenty-five, medium height, fond of music and singing. K. K. is twenty-three, tall, auburn hair, blue eyes, fond of children. Respondents must be from twenty to thirty.

DASHING MILLY, eighteen, medium height, dark, good-looking, would like to correspond with a dark, good-looking young gentleman between twenty and thirty with a view to matrimony.

ETTA, JENNIE and EMMIE, three friends, would like to correspond with three young gentlemen. Etta is twenty-one, light hair, blue eyes. Jennie is nineteen, dark, good-looking. Emmie is nineteen, medium height, dark, blue eyes.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

JIMMY BUNGS is responded to by—May G., twenty-five, medium height, dark, of a loving disposition, fond of home.

TORPEDO JACK by—Ethel E., nineteen, fair, auburn hair, blue eyes, fond of home.

COOK'S LADY by—Nellie D., twenty, fair, of a loving disposition.

SALE HO by—Maud N., twenty-one, fair, of a loving disposition, fond of music.

EIGHTEEN BOB by—Lily T., nineteen, tall, dark, of a loving disposition, fond of dancing.

NEW PATTERN HAT by—Edith E., twenty, light hair, grey eyes, of a loving disposition.

TIME GUSE by—Eliza, twenty-one, medium height, dark hair and eyes, of a loving disposition.

TORPEDO NED by—Mary, seventeen, dark hair and eyes, fond of dancing.

DICK DEADLY by—Lizzie, twenty-one, tall, brown hair, blue eyes, fond of home and music.

HURRICANE JACK by—Lottie, nineteen, auburn hair, brown eyes.

JIMMY BUNGS by—Lonely Annie, twenty-eight.

DICK DEADLY by—Seaflower, twenty-two, medium height, dark.

HURRICANE JACK by—Waterwitch, nineteen, medium height, dark.

TRUE TO THE CORE by—Mabel Truegold, medium height, good-looking.

COOK'S LADY by—Cook, twenty-three, medium height, dark.

EIGHTEEN BOB by—Moon, twenty-two, tall, dark.

JOHN D. by—Harty, twenty-three, tall, dark.

MENOTTI TEST by—Polly.

GALVANOMETER by—Jennie.

UNION JACK BILL by—Allie, tall, dark, good-looking, fond of home and children.

WHITE ENSIGN FRANK by—Millie, fair, good-looking.

LAUGHING WILLIAM by—Anna, eighteen, medium height, good-looking.

ALL the back Numbers, Parts, and Volumes of the LONDON READER are in print, and may be had at the Office, 334, Strand; or will be sent to any part of the United Kingdom post free for Three Halfpence, Eight-pence, and Five Shillings and Eightpence each.

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NOTICE.—Part 223 (May) Now Ready, Price Six-pence; post free, Eightpence.

N.B.—Correspondents must address their Letters to the Editor of the LONDON READER, 334, Strand, W.C.

* * * We cannot undertake to return Rejected Manuscripts. As they are sent to us voluntarily authors should retain copies.

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